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THE TORCH

AND OTHER LECTURES AND ADDRESSES

BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

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CONTENTS

THE TORCH

Man and the Race, 3
The Language of all the World, 25
The Titan Myth (I), 43
The Titan Myth (II), 63
Spenser, 83
Milton, 103
Wordsworth, 121
Shelley, 143

THE INSPIRATION OF POETRY

Poetic Madness, 165
Marlowe, 183
Camoens, 202
Byron, 221
Gray, 241
Tasso, 261
Lucretius, 281
Inspiration, 301

THE POE CENTENARY, 323

SHAKESPEARE, 329

THE SALEM ATHENÆUM, 351

Eight lectures on Race Power in Literature, delivered before the Lowell Institute of Boston, 1903

AUGESCUNT ALIAE GENTES, ALIAE MINUUNTUR,
INQUE BREVI SPATIO MUTANTUR SAECLA ANIMANTUM
ET QUASI CURSORES VITAI LAMPADA TRADUNT

I

MAN AND THE RACE

It belongs to a highly developed race to become, in a true sense, aristocratic — a treasury of its best in practical and spiritual types, and then to disappear in the surrounding tides of men. So Athens dissolved like a pearl in the cup of the Mediterranean, and Rome in the cup of Europe, and Judæa in the cup of the Universal Communion. Though death is the law of all life, man touches this earthen fact with the wand of the spirit, and transforms it into the law of sacrifice. Man has won no victory over his environment so sublime as this, finding in his mortal sentence the true choice of the soul and in the road out of Paradise the open highway of eternal life. Races die; but the ideal of sacrifice as the highest race-destiny has seldom occurred to men, though it has been suggested both by devout Jews and by devout Irishmen as the divinely appointed organic law of the Hebrew and the Celt. In the general view of men the extinction of a race partakes of the unreasoning finality of nature.

The vital flow of life has this in common with disease — that it is self-limited; the fever runs its course, and burns away. "All thoughts, all passions, all delights," have this history. In the large arcs of social being, movements of the human spirit, however embracing and profound, obey the same law of the limitation of specific energy. Revolutions, reforms, re-births exhaust their

fuel, and go out. Races are only greater units of man; for a race, as for an individual, there is a time to die; and that time, as history discloses it, is the moment of perfection. This is the largest fact in the moral order of the world; it is the center of providence in history. In the life of the human spirit the death of the best of its achieving elements, in the moment of their consummation, is as the fading of the flower of the field or the annual fall of the leaves of the forest in the natural world; and unless this be a sacrificial death, it were wantonness and waste like the deaths of nature; but man and his works are supernatural, and raised above nature by an imperishable relation which they contain. Race-history is a perpetual celebration of the Mass. The Cross initials every page with its broad gold, and he whose eye misses that letter has lost the clue to the meaning. I do not refer to the self-devotion of individuals, the sacred lives of the race. I speak of the involuntary element in the life of nations, or what seems such on the vast scale of social life. Always some great culture is dying to enrich the soil of new harvests, some civilization is crumbling to rubbish to be the hill of a more beautiful city, some race is spending itself that a lower and barbarous world may inherit its stored treasure-house. Although no race may consciously devote itself to the higher ends of mankind, it is the prerogative of its men of genius so to devote it; nor is any nation truly great which is not so dedicated by its warriors and statesmen, its saints and heroes, its thinkers and dreamers. A nation's poets are its true owners; and by the stroke of the pen they convey the title-deeds of its real possessions to strangers and aliens.

This dedication of the energy of a race by its men

of genius to the higher ends of mankind is the sap of all the world. The spiritual life of mankind spreads, the spiritual unity of mankind grows, by this age-long surrender of privilege and power into the hands of the world's new men, and the leavening of the mass by the best that has anywhere arisen in it, which is thus brought about. The absorption of aristocracies in democracies, the dissolution of the nobler product in inferior environments, the salutary death of cultures, civilizations, breeds of men, is the strict line on which history, drawing the sundered parts of the earth slowly together, moves to that great consummation when the best that has at any time been in the world shall be the portion of every man born into it. If the old English blood, which here on this soil gave birth to a nation, spread civilization through it, and cast the orbit of its starry course in time, is destined to be thus absorbed and lost in the nation which it has formed, we should be proud and happy in such a fate; for this is to wear the seal of God's election in history. Nay, if the aristocracy of the whole white race is so to melt in a world of the colored races of the earth, I for one should only rejoice in such a divine triumph of the sacrificial idea in history; for it would mean the humanization of mankind.

Unless this principle is strongly grasped, unless there be an imperishable relation in man and his works which they contain, and which, though it has other phases, here appears in this eternal salvage stored up in a slowly perfecting race, history through its length and breadth is a spectacle to appall and terrify the reason. The perpetual flux of time —

> "Scepters, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
> Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance" —

is a mere catastrophe of blood and error unless its mighty subverting and dismaying changes are related to something which does not pass away with dethroned gods, abandoned empires and repealed codes of law and morals. But in the extinction of religions, in imperial revolutions, in the bloody conflict of ideas, there is one thing found stable; it is the mind itself, growing through ages. That which in its continuity we call the human spirit, abides. Men, tribes, states disappear, but the race-mind endures. A conception of the world and an emotional response thereto constitute the life of the race-mind, and fill its consciousness with ideas and feelings, but in these there is no element of chance, contingency or frailty; they are master-ideas, master-emotions, clothed with the power of a long reign over men, and imposing themselves upon each new generation almost with the yoke of necessity. What I designated as the race-mind — the sole thing permanent in history — is this potentiality of thought and feeling, in any age, realizing itself in states of mind and habits of action long established in the race, deeply inherited, and slowly modified. The race-mind is the epitome of the past. It contains all human energy, knowledge, experience, that survives. It is the resultant of millions of lives whose earthly power it stores in one deathless force.

This race-mind is simply formed. Life presents certain permanent aspects in the environment, which generates ways of behavior thereto, normal and general among men. The world is a multiplicity, a harvest-field, a battle-ground; and thence arises through human contact ways of numbering, or mathematics, ways of tillage, or agriculture, ways of fighting, or military tactics and strategy, and these are incorporated in individ-

uals as habits of life. The craftsman has the mind of his craft. Life also presents certain other permanent internal aptitudes in the soul, whence arises the mind of the artist, the inventor, the poet. But this cast of mind of the mathematician or of the painter is rather a phase of individual life. In the larger unit of the race, environment and aptitude, working together in the historic life of ages, develop ideas, moods and energies characteristic of the race in which they occur. In the sphere of ideas, freedom is indissolubly linked with the English, righteousness with the Hebrew; in the temperamental sphere, a signal instance is the Celtic genius — mystery, twilight, supernatural fantasy, lamentation, tragic disaster; or the Greek genius — definiteness, proportioned beauty, ordered science, philosophic principle; and, in the sphere of energy, land and gold hunger, and that strange soul-hunger — hunger to possess the souls of men — which is at the root of all propagandism, have been motive powers in many races.

Thus, in one part or another of time and place, and from causes within and without, the race, coming to its best, flowers in some creative hope, ripens in some shaping thought, glows in some resistless enthusiasm. Each of these in its own time holds an age in its grasp. They seize on men and shape them in multitudes to their will, as the wind drives the locusts; make men hideous ascetics, send them on forlorn voyages, devote them to the block and the stake, make Argonauts, Crusaders, Lollards of them, fill Europe in one age with a riot of revolution and in the next with the camps of tyrannic power. These ideas, moods, energies have mysterious potency; they seem to possess an independent being; though, like all the phenomena of life-energy they are

self-limited, the period of their growth, culmination and decline extends through generations and centuries; they seem less the brood of man's mind than higher powers that feed on men. They are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses — fanatics, martyrs, dupes; they doom whole peoples to glory or shame; in the undying battle of the soul they are the choosers of the slain. Though they proceed from the human spirit, they rule it; and in life they are the spiritual presences which are most closely unveiled to the apprehension, devotion and love of men.

The race-mind building itself from immemorial time out of this mystery of thought and passion, as generation after generation kneels and fights and fades, takes unerringly the best that anywhere comes to be in the world, holds to it with the cling of fate, and lets all else fall to oblivion; out of this best it has made, and still fashions, that enduring world of idea and emotion into which we are born as truly as into the natural world. It has a marvelous economy.

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world has never lost."

Egypt, India, Greece and Rome, Italy, the English, France, America, the Turk, the Persian, the Russian, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Negro feed its pure tradition of what excellence is possible to the race-mind, and has grown habitual in its being; and, as in the old myth, it destroys its parent, abolishing all these differences of climate, epoch and skull. The race-mind unifies the race which it preserves; that is its irresistible line of advance. It wipes out the barriers of time, language and country. It undoes the mischief of Babel,

and restores to mankind one tongue in which all things can be understood by all men. It fuses the Bibles of all nations in one wisdom and one practice. It knocks off the tribal fetters of caste and creed; and, substituting thought for blood as the bond of the world, it slowly liberates that free soul, which is one in all men and common to all mankind. To free the soul in the individual life, and to accomplish the unity of mankind — that is its work.

To share in this work is the peculiar and characteristic office of literature. This fusion of the nations of the earth, this substitution of the thought-tie for the blood-tie, this enfranchisement of the soul, is its chief function; for literature is the organ of the race-mind. That is why literature is immortal. Though man's inheritance is bequeathed in many ways — the size and shape of the skull, the physical predisposition of the body, oral tradition, monumental and artistic works, institutions — civilization ever depends in an increasing degree upon literature both for expression and tradition; and whatever other forms the race-mind may mold itself into, literature is its most universal and comprehensive form. That is why literature is the great conservator of society. It shares in the life of the race-mind, partakes of its nature, as language does of thought, corresponds to it accurately, duplicates it, is its other-self. It is through literature mainly that we know the race-mind, and come to possess it; for though the term may seem abstract, the thing is real. Men of genius are great in proportion as they share in it, and national literatures are great in proportion as they embody and express it. Brunetiere, the present critic of France, has recently announced a new literary formula. He declares that there

is a European literature, not the combined group of national literatures, but a single literature common to European civilization, and that national literatures in their periods of culmination, are great in proportion as they coincide for the time being with this common literature, feed it, and, one after another taking the lead, create it. The declaration is a gleam of self-consciousness in the unity of Europe. How slowly the parts of a nation recognize the integrity of their territory and the community of their interests is one of the constant lessons of history; the Greek confederation, the work of Alfred or of Bismarck, our own experience in the Revolutionary period illustrate it; so the unity of Europe is still half-obscure and dark, though Catholicism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolution in turn flashed this unity forth, struggling to realize itself in the common civilization. The literature of Europe is the expression of this common genius — the best that man has dreamed or thought or done, has found or been in Europe — now more brilliant in one capital, now in another as the life ebbs from state to state, and is renewed; for, though it fail here or there, it never ceases. This is the burning of the race-mind, now bright along the Seine, the Rhine and the Thames, as once by the Ganges and the Tiber. The true unity of literature, however, does not lie in the literature of Europe or of India or of antiquity, or in any one manifestation, but in that world-literature which is the organ of the race-mind in its entire breadth and wholeness. The new French formula is a brilliant application, novel, striking and arresting, of the old and familiar idea that civilization in its evolution in history is a single process, continuous, advancing and integral, of which nations and ages are only the

successive phases. The life of the spirit in mankind is one and universal, burns with the same fires, moves to the same issues, joins in a single history; it is the race-mind realizing itself cumulatively in time, and mainly through the inheriting power of great literature.

I have developed this conception of the race-mind at some length because it is a primary idea. The nature of literature, and the perspective and interaction of particular literatures, are best comprehended in its light. I emphasize it. The world-literature, national literatures, individual men of genius, are what they are by virtue of sharing in the race-mind, appropriating it and identifying themselves with it; and what is true of them, on the great scale and in a high degree, is true also of every man who is born into the world. A man is a man by participating in the race-mind. Education is merely the process by which he enters it, avails himself of it, absorbs it. In the things of material civilization this is plain. All the callings of men, arts, crafts, trades, sciences, professions, the entire round of practical life, have a body of knowledge and method of work which are like gospel and ritual to them; apprentice, journeyman and master are the stages of their career; and if anything be added, from life to life, it is on a basis of ascertained fact, of orthodox doctrine and fixed practice. I suppose technical education is most uniform, and by definiteness of aim and economy of method is most efficient; and in the professions as well as in the arts and crafts competition places so high a premium on knowledge and skill that the mastery of all the past can teach is compulsory in a high degree. Similarly, in society, the material unities such as those which commerce, manufacturing, banking establish and spread, are soon-

est evident and most readily accepted; so true is this that the peace of the world is rather a matter of finance than of Christianity. These practical activities and the interests that spring out of them lie in the sphere of material civilization; but the race-mind, positive, enduring and beneficent as it is in that sphere, is there parceled out and individualized, and gives a particular and almost private character to man and classes of men, and it seeks a material good. There is another and spiritual sphere in which the soul which is one and the same in all men comes to self-knowledge, has its training, and achieves its mastery of the world. Essential, universal manhood is found only here; for it is here that the race-mind, by participation in which a man is a man, enfranchises the soul and gives to it the citizenship of the world. Education in the things of the spirit is often vague in aim and may seem wasteful in method, and it is not supported by the thrust and impetus of physical need and worldly hope; but it exists in all men in some measure, for no one born in our civilization is left so savage, no savage born in the wild is left so primitive but that he holds a mental attitude, however obscure, toward nature, man and God, and has some discipline, however initial, in beauty, love and religion. These things lie in the sphere of this soul. It is, nevertheless, true that the greatest inequalities of condition exist here, and not in that part of life where good is measured by the things of fortune. The difference between the outcast and the millionaire is as nothing to that between the saint and the criminal, the fool and the knower, the boor and the poet. It is a blessing in our civilization, and one worthy of the hand of Providence, that if in material things justice be a laggard and

disparities of condition be hard to remedy, the roads to church and school are public highways, free to all. This charter of free education in the life of the soul, which is the supreme opportunity of an American life, is an open door to the treasury of man's spirit. There whosoever will shall open the book of all the world, and read and ponder, and shall enter the common mind of man which is there contained and avail of its wisdom and absorb its energies into his own and become one with it in insight, power and hope, and ere he is aware shall find himself mingling with the wisest, the holiest, the loveliest, as their comrade and peer. He shall have poet and sage to sup with him, and their meal shall be the bread of life.

What, then, is the position of the youth — of any man whose infinite life lies before him — at his entrance on this education, on this attempt to become one with the mind of the race? and, to neglect the material side of life, what is the process by which he begins to live in the spirit, and not as one new-born, but even in his youth sharing in the wisdom and disciplined power of a soul that has lived through all human ages — the soul of mankind? We forget the beginnings of life; we forget first sensation, first action, and the unknown magic by which, as the nautilus builds its shell, we built out of these early elements this world of the impalpable blue walls, the ocean and prairie floors, and star-sown space, each one of us for ourselves. There is a thought, which I suppose is a commonplace and may be half-trivial, but it is one that took hold of me in boyhood with great tenacity, and stirred the sense of strangeness and marvel in life; the idea that all I knew or should ever know was through something that had touched my body. The

ether-wave envelops us as the ocean, and in that small surface of contact is the sphere of sensibility — of light, sound, and the rest — out of which arises the world which each one of us perceives. It seems a fantastic conception, but it is a true one. For me the idea seemed to shrink the world to the dark envelope of my own body. It served, however, to initiate me in the broader conception that the soul is the center, and that life — the world — radiates from it into the enclosing infinite. Wordsworth, you remember, in his famous image of our infancy presents the matter differently; for him the infant began with the infinite, and boy and man lived in an ever narrowing world, a contracting prison, like that fabled one of the Inquisition, and in the end life became a thing common and finite:

> "Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy,
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy:
>
> . . . . . .
>
> At length the man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."

This was never my own conception, nor do I think it is natural to many men. On the contrary, life is an expansion. The sense of the larger world comes first, perhaps, in those unremembered years when the sky ceases to be an inverted bowl, and lifts off from the earth. The experience is fixed for me by another half-childish memory, the familiar verses of Tom Hood in which he describes his early home. You will recall the almost nursery rhymes:

"I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 't is little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
Than when I was a boy."

Sentiment in the place of philosophy, the thought is the same as Wordsworth's, but the image is natural and true. The noblest image, however, that sets forth the spread of the world, is in that famous sonnet by an obscure poet, Blanco White, describing the first time that the sun went down in Paradise:

"Mysterious night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet, 'neath the curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view."

The theory of Copernicus and the voyage of Columbus are the great historical moments of such change in the thoughts of men. As travel thus discloses the amplitude of the planet and science fills the infinite of space for the learning mind, history in its turn peoples the "dark background and abysm of time." But more marvelous than the unveiling of time and space, is that last revelation which unlocks the inward world of idea and emotion, and gives solidity to life as by a third dimension. It is this world which is the realm of imaginative literature; scarcely by any other interpreter shall a man come into knowledge of it with any adequacy; and here the sub-

ject draws to a head, for it is by the operation of literature in this regard that the race-mind takes possession of the world.

We are plunged at birth *in medias res,* as the phrase is, into the midst of things — into a world already old, of old ideas, old feelings, old experience, that has drunk to the lees the wisdom of the teacher of Ecclesiastes, and renews in millions of lives the life that has been lived a million times; a world of custom and usage, of immemorial habits, of causes prejudged, of insoluble problems, of philosophies and orthodoxies and things established; and yet, too, a world of the undiscovered. The youth awakes in this world, intellectually, in literature; and since the literature of the last age is that on which the new generation is formed, he now first comes in contact with the large life of mankind in the literature of the last century. It is an extraordinary miscellaneous literature, varied and copious in matter, full of conflicting ideas, cardinal truths, and hazardous guesses; and for the young mind the problem of orientation — that is of finding itself, of knowing the true East, is difficult. Literature, too, has an electric stimulation, and in the first onrush of the intellectual life brings that well-known storm and stress which is the true awakening; with eager and delighted surprise the soul feels fresh sensibilities and unsuspected energies rise in its being. It is a time of shocks, discoveries, experiences that change the face of the world. Reading the poets, the youth finds new dynamos in himself. A new truth unseals a new faculty in him; a new writer unlooses a new force in him; he becomes, like Briareus, hundred-handed, like Shakespeare, myriad-minded. So like a miracle is the discovery of the power of life.

Let me illustrate the experience in the given case — the literature of the nineteenth century. It will all fall under three heads: the world of nature's frame, the world of man's action, the world of God's being. Nature is, in the first instance, a spectacle. One may see the common sights of earth, and still have seen little. The young eye requires to be trained in what to see, what to choose to see out of the vague whole, and so to see his true self reflected there in another form, for in the same landscape the farmer, the military engineer, the painter see each a different picture. Burns teaches the young heart to see nature realistically, definitely, in hard outline, and always in association with human life — and the presence of animals friendly and serviceable to man, the life of the farm, is a dominant note in the scene. Byron guides the eye to elemental grandeur in the storm and in the massiveness of Alp and ocean. Shelley brings out color and atmosphere and evokes the luminous spirit from every star and dew-drop and dying wave. Tennyson makes nature an artist's easel where from poem to poem glows the frescoing of the walls of life. Thus changing from page to page the youth sees nature with Burns as a man who sympathizes with human toil, with Byron as a man who would mate with the tempest, with Shelley as a man of almost spiritualized senses, with Tennyson as a man of artistic luxury. Again, nature is an order, a law in matter, such as science conceives her; and this phase appears inceptively in "Queen Mab" and explicitly in "In Memoriam," and many a minor poem of Tennyson, not the less great because minor in his work, in which alone the scientific spirit of the age has found utterance equal to its own sublimity. Yet, again, nature is a symbol, an expres-

sion of truth itself in another medium than thought; and so, in minute ways, Burns moralized the "Mountain Daisy," and Wordsworth the "Small Celandine"; and, on the grand scale, Shelley mythologized nature in vast oracular figures of man's faith, hope, and destiny. And again, nature is a molding influence so close to human life as to be a spiritual presence about and within it. This last feeling of the participation of nature in life is so fundamental that no master of song is without it; but, in this group, Wordsworth is pre-eminent as its exponent, with such directness, certainty and power did he seize and express it. What he saw in dalesmen was what the mountains had made them; what he told in "Tintern Abbey" was nature's making of him; what he sang in his lyric of ideal womanhood was such an intimacy of nature with woman's being that it was scarcely to be divided from her spirit. The power which fashions us from birth, sustains the vital force of the body, and feeds its growing functions, seems to exceed the blind and mute region of matter, and feeding the senses with color, music and delight shapes the soul itself and guides it, and supports and consoles the child it has created in mortality. I do not overstate Wordsworth's sense of this truth; and it is a truth that twines about the roots of all poetry like a river of life. It explains to the growing boy something in his own history, and he goes on in the paths he has begun to follow, it may be with touches of vague mystery but with an expectant, receptive and responsive heart. In regard to nature, then, the youth's life under the favor of these poets appreciates her in at least these four ways, artistically, scientifically, symbolically and spiritually, and begins to fix in molds of his own spirit that miracle of change, the Protean being of matter.

To turn to the world of man's life, the simplest gain from contact with this literature of which I am speaking is in the education of the historic sense. Romance discovered history, and seeking adventure and thriving on what it sought, made that great find, the Middle Ages, which the previous time looked on much as we regard the civilization of China with mingled ignorance and contempt. It found also the Gael and the Northmen, and many an outlying region, many a buried tract of time. In Scott's novels characteristically, but also in countless others, in the rescued and revived ballad of England and the North, and in the renewed forms of Greek imagination, the historic sense is strongly drawn on, and no reader can escape its culture, for the place of history and its inspirational power in literature is fundamental in the spirit of the nineteenth century. But what most arrests the young heart, in this world of man's life, is those ideas which we sum up as the Revolution, and the principle of democracy which is primary in the literature of the last age. There the three great words — liberty, fraternity and equality — and the theory that in Shelley was so burning an enthusiasm and in Byron so passionate a force, are still aflame; and the new feeling toward man which was implicit in democracy is deeply planted in that aspect of fraternity which appears in the interest in the common lot, and in that aspect of liberty which appears in the sense of the dignity of the individual. Burns, Scott, Dickens illustrate the one; Byron, Shelley and Carlyle the other. The literature of the great watchwords, the literature of the life of the humble classes, the literature of the rebellious individual will — the latter flashing out many a wild career and exploding many a startling theory of

how life is to be lived — are the very core and substance of the time. The application of ideas to life in the large, of which Rousseau was so cardinal an example, opens an endless field in a century so rich in discovery, so active in intellect and so plastic in morals; and here one may wander at will. Here is matter for a lifetime. But without particularizing, it is plain how variously, how profoundly and vividly through this literature the mind is exercised in the human world, takes on the color, picturesqueness and movement of history, builds up the democratic social faith and develops the energy of individual freedom, and becomes a place for the career of great ideas.

There remains the world of God's being, or to vary the phrase in sympathy with the mode of approach characteristic of the nineteenth century, the world in which God is. It may be broadly stated that the notion of what used to be called an absentee God, a far-off Ruler overseeing by modes analogous to human administration the affairs of earth as a distant province, finds no place in this literature of the last age. The note of thought is rather of the intimacy of God with his creation and with the soul of man. God is known in two ways; as an idea in the intellect and as an experience in the emotions; and in poetry the two modes blend, and often blur where they blend. Their habitual expression in the great poets of the age is in pantheistic forms, but this is rather a matter of form than of substance. The immanence of the divine is the root-idea; in Wordsworth it is an immanence of sublime power, seized through communion with nature; in Shelley, who was more profoundly human, it is an immanence of transcendent love, seized through his sense of the destiny of the universe

that carries in its bosom the glory of life; in Tennyson, in whom the sense of a veiled intellect was more deep, it is an immanence of mystery in both the outer and the inner world. In other parts of the field, God is also conceived in history, and there immanent as Providence. His immanence in the individual — a matter dark to any thought — is most explicitly set forth by Emerson. It is perhaps generally considered that in the literature of the nineteenth century there is a large sceptical and atheistic element; but this is an error. Genius by its own nature has no part in the spirit that denies; it is positive, affirms and creates. Its apparent denials will be found to be partial, and affect fragments of a dead past only; its denials are, in reality, higher and more universal affirmations. If Wordsworth appears to put nature in the place of God, or Shelley love, or Keats beauty, they only affirm that phase of the divine which is nighest to their own apprehension, affection and delight. Their experience of the divine governs and blends with their intellectual theory, sometimes, as I have said, with a blur of thought. Each one's experience in these things is for himself alone, and private; the ways of the Spirit no man knows; but it is manifest that for the opening mind, whether of youth or of older years, the sense of eternity, however delicate, subtle and silent is its realm, is fed nobly, sweetly and happily, by these poets in whom the spirit of man crying for expression unlocks the secrecy of its relations to the infinite.

Such is the nature of the contact of the mind with literature by means of which it enters on its race inheritance of idea and emotion, takes possession of the stored results, clothes itself with energies whose springs are in the earliest distance of time, and builds up anew for it-

self the whole and various world as it has come to be known by man in his age-long experience. The illustration I have employed minimizes the constancy, the completeness, the vastness of the process; for it takes no account of other disciplines, of religious tradition and practice, of oral transmission, and of such universal and intimate formative powers as mere language. But it will be found on analysis that all of these depend, in the main, on literature in the broad sense; and, in the education of the soul in the higher life, the awakening, the revealing and upbuilding force lies, I am persuaded, in the peculiar charge of literature in which the race-mind has stamped an image of itself.

It is obvious that what I have advanced, brings the principle of authority into a cardinal place in life, and clothes tradition with great power. It might seem that the individual in becoming one with the race-mind has only to endue himself with the past as with a garment, to take its mold with the patience of clay, and to be in the issue a recast of the past, thinking old thoughts, feeling old emotions, doing old actions, in pre-established ways. But this is to misconceive the process by which the individual effects this union; he does not take the impress of the race-mind as the wax receives the imprint of the seal. This union is an act of life, a process of energy, joy and growth, of self-expression; here learning is living, and there is no other way to know the doctrine than to do its will; so the race-mind is not copied, but is perpetually re-born in men, and the world which each one of us thus builds for himself out of his preferred capacities, memories and desires — our farmer's, engineer's, painter's world, as I have said — is his own original and unique world. There is none like it, none.

Originality consists in this re-birth of the world in the young soul. This world, nevertheless, the world of each of us, is not one of willfulness, fantasy and caprice; if, on the one hand, it is such stuff as dreams are made of, on the other it is the stuff of necessity. It has a consistency, a law and fate, of its own, which supports, wields and sustains it. Authority is no more than the recognition of and obedience to this underlying principle of being, whose will is disclosed to us in man's life so far as that life in its wholeness falls within our view; in knowledge of this will all wisdom consists, of its action in us all experience is woven, and in union with it all private judgment is confirmed. Authority, truly interpreted, is only another phase of that identity of the soul in all men by virtue of which society exists, and especially that intellectual state arises, that state which used to be called the republic of letters and which is the institution of the race-mind to be the center, the home and hope of civilization in all ages — that state where the unity of mankind is accomplished in the spiritual unities of science, art and love.

To sum up these suggestions which I have thought it desirable to offer in order that the point of view taken in these lectures might, perhaps, be plain, I conceive of history as a single process in which through century after century in race after race the soul of man proceeds in a progressive comprehension of the universe and evolution of its own humanity, and passes on to each new generation its accumulated knowledge and developed energies, in their totality and without loss, at the acme of achievement. I conceive of this inheriting and bequeathing power as having its life and action in the race-mind. I conceive of literature as an organ of the race-

mind, and of education as the process by which the individual enters into the race-mind, becomes more and more man, and in the spiritual life mainly by means of literature. I conceive of the body of men who thus live and work in the soul as constituting the intellectual state, that republic of letters, in which the race-mind reaches, from age to age, its maximum of knowledge and power, in men of genius and those whose lives they illumine, move and direct; the unity of mankind is the ideal end of this state, and the freeing of the soul which takes place in it is its means. I conceive of the progressive life of this state, in civilization after civilization, as a perpetual death of the best, in culture after culture, for the good of the lower, a continuing sacrifice, in the history of humanity, of man for mankind. And from this mystery, though to some it may seem only the recourse of intellectual despair, I pluck a confident faith in that imperishable relation which man and his works contain, and which though known only in the continuity of the race-mind, I am compelled to believe, has eternal reality.

II

THE LANGUAGE OF ALL THE WORLD

The language of literature is the language of all the world. It is necessary to divest ourselves at once of the notion of diversified vocal and grammatical speech which constitutes the various tongues of the earth, and conceals the identity of image and logic in the minds of all men. Words are intermediary between thought and things. We express ourselves really not through words, which are only signs, but through what they signify — through things. Literature is the expression of life. The question, then, is — what things has literature found most effectual to express life, and has therefore habitually preferred? and what tradition in consequence of this habit of preference has been built up in all literatures, and obtained currency and authority in this province of the wider realm of all art? It is an interesting question, and fundamental for any one who desires to appreciate literature understandingly. Perhaps you will permit me to approach it somewhat indirectly.

You are all familiar with something that is called poetic diction — that is, a selected language specially fitted for the uses of poetry; and you are, perhaps, not quite so familiar with the analogous feature in prose, which is now usually termed preciosity, or preciousness of language, that is, a highly refined and esthetic diction, such as Walter Pater employs. The two are constant products of language that receives any literary cultiva-

tion, and they are sometimes called diseases of language. Thus, in both early and late Greek there sprang up literary styles of expression, involving the preference of certain words, constructions and even cadences, and the teaching of art in these matters was the business of the Greek rhetorician; so in Italy, Spain, and France, in the Renaissance, similar styles, each departing from the common and habitual speech of the time, grew up, and in England you identify this mood of language in Elizabeth's day as Euphuism. The phenomenon is common, and belongs to the nature of language. Poetic diction, however, you perhaps associate most clearly with the mannerism in language of the eighteenth century in England, when common and so-called vulgar words were exiled from poetry, and Gray, for example, could not speak of the Eton schoolboys as playing hoop, but only as "chasing the rolling circle's speed," and when, to use the stock example, all green things were "verdant." This is fixed in our memory because Wordsworth has the credit of leading an attack on the poetic diction of that period, both critically in his prefaces and practically in his verse; he went to the other extreme, and introduced into his poetry such homely words as "tub," for example; he held that the proper language of poetry is the language of common life. So Emerson in his addresses, you remember, had recourse to the humblest objects for illustration, and shocked the formalism of his time by speaking of "the meal in the firkin, the milk in the pan." He was applying in prose the rule of Wordsworth in poetry. Walt Whitman represents the extreme of this use of the actual language of men. But if you consider the matter, you will see that this choice of the homely word only sets up at last a fashion of homeliness in the

place of a fashion of refinement, and breeds, for instance, dialect poets in shoals; and often the choice is really not of the word, but of the homely thing itself as the object of thought and expressive image of it; and in men so great as Emerson and Wordsworth the practice is a proof of that sympathy with common life which made them both great democrats. But in addition to the diction that characterizes an age, you must have observed that in every original writer there grows up a particular vocabulary, structure and rhythm that he affects and that in the end become his mannerism, or distinctive style, so marked that you recognize his work by its stamp alone, as in Keats, Browning, and Swinburne in poetry, and in Arnold in prose. In other words there is at work in the language of a man, or of an age even, a constant principle of selection which tends to prefer certain ways and forms of speech to others, and in the end develops a language characteristic of the age, or of the man.

This principle of selection, whether it works toward refinement or homeliness, operates in the same way. It must be remembered — and it is too often forgotten — that the problem of any artistic work is a problem of economy. How to get into the two hours' traffic of the stage the significance of a whole life, of a group of lives; how to pack into a sixteen-line lyric a dramatic situation and there sphere it in its own emotion; how to rouse passion and pour it in a three-minute poem, like Shelley's "Indian Air" — all these are problems in economy, by which speed, condensation, intensity are gained. Now words in themselves are colorless, except so far as their musical quality is concerned; but the thing that a word stands for has a meaning of its own and usually a meaning charged with associations, and often this asso-

ciative meaning is the primary and important one in its use. A rose, for example, is but the most beautiful of flowers in itself, but it is so charged with association in men's lives, and still more heavily charged with long use of emotion in literature, that the very word and mere name of it awakes the heart and sets a thousand memories unconsciously vibrating. This added meaning is what I am accustomed to term an overtone in words; and it is manifest that, in view of the necessity for economy in poetic art, those words which are the richest and deepest in overtone will be preferred, because of the speed, certainty and fullness they contain. The question will be what overtones in life appeal most to this or that poet; he will reproduce them in his verse; Pope will use the overtones of a polished society, Wordsworth and Emerson those of humble life. Now our larger question is what overtones are characteristically preferred in great literature, in what objects do they most inhere, and in what way is the authoritative tradition of literature, as respects its means of expression, thus built up?

It goes without saying that all overtones are either of thought or feeling. What modes of expression, then, what material objects, what forms of imagination, what abstract principles of thought, are most deeply charged with ideas and emotions? It will be agreed that, as a mere medium, music expresses pure emotion most directly and richly; music seems to enter the physical frame of the body itself, and move there with the warmth and instancy of blood. The sound of words, therefore, cannot be neglected, and in the melody and echo of poetry sound is a cardinal element; yet, it is here only the veining of the marble, it is not the material itself. In the objects which words summon up, there is sometimes

an emotional power as direct and immediate as that of music itself, as for example, in the great features of nature, the mountains, the plains, the ocean, which awe even the savage mind. But, in general, the emotional power of material objects is lent to them by association, that is by the human use that has been made of them, as on the plain of Marathon, to use Dr. Johnson's old illustration, it is the thought of what happened there that makes the spectator's patriotism "gain force" as he surveys the scene. This human use of the world is the fountain of significance in all imaginative and poetic speech; and in the broad sense history is the story of this human use of the world.

History is so much of past experience as abides in race-memory; and underlies race-literature in the same way that a poet's own experience underlies his expression of life. I do not mean that when a poet unlocks his heart, as Shakespeare did in his sonnets, he necessarily writes his own biography; in the poems he writes there may be much of actual event as in Burns's love songs, or little as in Dante's "New Life." Much of a poet's experience takes place in imagination only; the life he tells is oftenest the life that he strongly desires to live, and the power, the purity and height of his utterance may not seldom be the greater because experience here uses the voices of desire. "All I could never be," in Browning's plangent line, has been the mounting strain of the sublimest and the tenderest songs of men. All Ireland could never be, thrills and sorrows on her harp's most resonant string, and is the master-note to which her sweetest music ever returns. All man could never be makes the sad majesty of Virgil's verse. As with a man, what a nation strongly desires is no small part of its life, and is the

mark of destiny upon it, whether for failure or success; so the note of world-empire is heard in the latest English verse, and the note of humanity — the service of all men — has always been dominant in our own. History, then, must be thought of, in its relation to literature, as including the desire as well as the performance of the race.

History, however, in the narrowest sense, lies close to the roots of imaginative literature. The great place of history and its inspirational power in the literature of the last century I have already referred to; it is one of the most important elements in the extraordinary reach and range of that splendid outburst of imagination throughout Europe. Aristotle recognized the value of history as an aid to the imagination, at the very moment that he elevated poetry above history. In that necessary economy of art, of which I spoke, it is a great gain to have well-known characters and familiar events, such as Agamemnon and the Trojan War, in which much is already done for the spectator before the play begins. So our present historical novelists have their stories half-written for them in the minds of their readers, and especially avail themselves of an emotional element there, a patriotism, which they do not have to create. The use of history to the imagination, however, goes farther than merely to spare it the pains of creating character and incident and evoking emotion. It assists a literary movement to begin with race-power much as a poet's or — as in Dickens's case — a novelist's own experience aids him to develop his work, however much that experience may be finally transformed in the work. Thus the novel of the last age really started its great career from Scott's historic sense working out into imaginative expression, and in a lesser degree from so minor a writer as Miss

Edgeworth in whose Irish stories — which were contemporary history — Scott courteously professed to find his own starting point. It is worth noting, also, that the Elizabethan drama had the same course. Shakespeare following Marlowe's example developed from the historical English plays, in which he worked in Scott's manner, into his full control of imagination in the purely ideal sphere. History has thus often been the handmaid of imagination, and the foster-mother of great literary ages. Yet to vary Aristotle's phrase — poetry is all history could never be.

It appears to me, nevertheless, that history underlies race-literature in a far more profound and universal way. History is mortal: it dies. Yet it does not altogether die. Elements, features, fragments of it survive, and enter into the eternal memory of the race, and are there transformed, and — as we say — spiritualized. Literature is the abiding-place of this transforming power, and most profits by it. And to come to the heart of the matter, there have been at least three such cardinal transformations in the past.

The first transformation of history is mythology. I do not mean to enter on the vexed question of the origin of mythologies; and, of course, in referring to history as its ground, I include much more than that hero-worship such as you will find elaborated or invented in Carlyle's essay on Odin, and especially I include all that experience of nature and her association with human toil and moods that you will find delineated with such marvelous subtleness and fullness in Walter Pater's essay on Dionysus. In mythology, mankind preserved from his primitive experience of nature, and his own heroic past therein, all that had any lasting significance; and, al-

though all mythologies have specific features and a particular value of their own, yet the race, coming to its best, as I have said, bore here its perfect blossom in Greek mythology. I know not by what grace of heaven, by what felicity of blend in climate, blood and the fortune of mortal life, but so it was that the human soul put forth the bud of beauty in the Greek race; and there, at the dawn of our own intellectual civilization and in the first sunrise of our poetry in Homer, was found a world filled with divine — with majestic and lovely figures, which had absorbed into their celestial being and forms the power of nature, the splendor and charm of the material sphere, the fructifying and beneficent operations of the external universe, the providence of the state and the inspiration of all arts and crafts, of games and wars and song; each of these deities was a flashing center of human energy, aspiration, reliance — with a realm and servants of its own; and mingling with them in fair companionship was a company of demi-gods and heroes, of kings and princes, and of golden youths, significant of the fate of all young life — Adonis, Hippolytus, Orestes. This mythologic world was near to earth, and it mixed with legendary history, such history as the "Iliad" contained, and also with the private and public life of the citizens, being the ceremonial religion of the state. It was all, nevertheless, the transformation that man had accomplished of his own past, his joys and sorrows, his labors, his insights and desires, the deeds of his ancestors — the human use that he made of the world. This was the body of idea and emotion to which the poet appealed in that age, precisely as our historical novelists now appeal to our own knowledge of history and pre-established emotion with regard to it, our patriotism. Here

they found a language already full charged with emotion and intelligence, of which they could avail themselves, and speaking which they spoke with the voices of a thousand years. Nevertheless, it was at best a language like others, and subject to change and decay in expressive power. The time came when, the creative impulse in mythology having ceased and its forms being fixed, the mythic world lay behind the mind of the advancing race which had now attained conceptions of the physical universe, and especially ideas of the moral life, which were no longer capable of being held in and expressed by the mythic world, but exceeded the bounds of earlier thought and feeling and broke the ancient molds. Then it was that Plato desired to exile the poets and their mythology from the state. He could not be content, either, with a certain change that had occurred; for the creative power in mythology having long ceased, as I have said, the imagination put forth a new function — a meditative power — and brooding over the old fables of the world of the gods discovered in them, not a record of fact, but an allegorical meaning, a higher truth which the fable contained. Mythology passed thus into an emblematic stage, in which it was again long used by mankind, as a language of universal power. Plato, however, could not free himself from the mythologic habit of imagination so planted in his race, and found the most effective expression for his ideas in the myths of his own invention which he made up by a dexterous and poetic adaptation of the old elements; and others later than Plato have found it hard to disuse the mythologic language; for, although the old religion as a thing of faith and practice died away, it survived as a thing of form and feature in art, as a phase of natural symbolism and

of inward loveliness of action and passion in poetry, as a chapter of romance in the history of the race; and the modern literatures of Europe are, in large measure, unintelligible without this key.

The second great transformation of history is chivalry. Here the phenomenon is nearer in time and lies more within the field of observation and knowledge; it is possible to trace the stages of the growth of the story of Roland with some detail and precision; but, on the other hand, the Arthur myth reaches far back into the beginnings of Celtic imagination, and all such race-myths tend to appropriate and embody in themselves the characteristic features both of one another and of whatever is held to be precious and significant in history or even in classical and Eastern legend. The true growth, however, is that feudal culture, which we know as knighthood, working out its own ideal of action and character and sentiment on a basis of bravery, courtesy, and piety, and thereby generating patterns of knighthood, typical careers, and in the end an imaginative interpretation of the purest spiritual life itself in the various legends of the Holy Grail. As in the pagan world the forms and fables of mythology and their interaction downward with the human world furnished the imaginative interpretation of life as it then was, so for the medieval age, the figures and tales of chivalry and their interaction upward with the spiritual world of Christianity, and also with the magic of diabolism round about, furnished the imaginative interpretation of that later life. It was this new body of ideas and emotion in the minds of men that the medieval poets appealed to, availed themselves of, and so spoke a language of imagery and passion that was a world-language, charged as I have said with the thought

and feeling, the tradition, of a long age. What happened to the language of mythology, happened also to this language; it lost the power of reality, and men arose who, being in advance of its conceptions of life, desired to exile it, denounce it or laugh it out of existence, like Ascham in England, and Cervantes in Spain. It also suffered that late change into an allegorical or emblematic meaning, and had a second life in that form as in the notable instance of Spenser's "Faerie Queene." It also could not die, but — just as mythology revived in the Alexandrian poets for a season, and fed Theocritus and Virgil — chivalry was re-born in the last century, and in Tennyson's Arthur, and in Wagner's "Parsifal" lived again in two great expressions of ideal life.

The third great transformation of history is contained in the Scriptures. The Bible is, in itself, a singularly complete expression of the whole life of a race in one volume — its faith and history blending in one body of poetry, thought and imaginative chronicle. It contains a celestial world in association with human events; its patriarchs are like demi-gods, and it has heroes, legends, tales in good numbers, and much romantic and passionate life, on the human side, besides its great stores of spirituality. In literary power it achieves the highest in the kinds of composition that is uses. It is as a whole, regarded purely from the human point of view, not unfairly to be compared in mass, variety, and scope of expression, with mythology and chivalry as constituting a third great form of imaginative language; nor has its history been dissimilar in the Christian world to which it came with something of that same remoteness in time and reality that belonged equally to mythology and chivalry. It was first used in a positive manner, as a thing of fact

and solid belief; but there soon grew up, you remember, in the Christian world that habit of finding a hidden meaning in its historical record, of turning it to a parable, of extracting from it an allegorical signification. It became, not only in parts but as a whole, emblematic, and its interpretation as such was the labor of centuries. This is commonly stated as the source of that universal mood of allegorizing which characterized the medieval world, and was as strongly felt in secular as in religious writers. Its historical tales, its theories of the universe, its cruder morals in the Jewish ages, have been scoffed at, just as was the case with the Greek myth, from the Apostate to Voltaire and later; but how great are its powers as a language is seen in the completeness with which it tyrannized over the Puritan life in England and made its history, its ideas, its emotions the habitual and almost exclusive speech of that strong Cromwellian age. In our country here in New England it gave the mold of imagination to our ancestors for two whole centuries. A book, which contains such power that it can make itself the language of life through so many centuries and in such various peoples is to be reckoned as one of the greatest instruments of race-expression that man possesses.

Mythology, chivalry, the Scriptures are the tongues of the imagination. It is far more important to know them than to learn French or German or Italian, or Latin or Greek; they are three branches of that universal language which though vainly sought on the lips of men is found in their minds and hearts. To omit these in education is to defraud youth of its inheritance; it is like destroying a long-developed organ of the body, like putting out the eye or silencing the nerves of hearing. Nor is it

enough to look them up in encyclopedias and notes, and so obtain a piecemeal information; one must grow familiar with these forms of beauty, forms of honor, forms of righteousness, have something of the same sense of their reality as that felt by Homer and Virgil, by the singer of Roland and the chronicler of the "Mort d'Arthur," by St. Augustine, and St. Thomas. He must form his imagination upon these idealities, and load his heart with them; else many a masterpiece of the human spirit will be lost to him, and most of the rest will be impaired. If one must know vocabulary and grammar before he can understand the speech of the mouth, much more must he know well mythology, chivalry and Bible-lore before he can take possession of the wisdom that the race-mind has spoken, the beauty it has molded life into, as a thing of passion and action, the economy of lucid power it has achieved for perfect human utterance, in these three fundamental forms of a true world-language. The literature of the last century is permeated with mythology, chivalry and to a less degree with Scripture, and no one can hope to assimilate it, to receive its message, unless his mind is drenched with these same things; and the further back his tastes and desires lead him into the literature of earlier times, the greater will be his need of this education in the material, the modes and the forms of past imagination.

It may be that a fourth great tongue of the imagination is now being shaped upon the living of men in the present and succeeding ages. If it be so, this will be the work of the democratic idea, which is now still at the beginning of its career; but since mythology and chivalry had their development in living men, it is natural to suppose that the human force is still operative in our

own generation as it once was in those of Hellenic and medieval years. The characteristic literature of democracy is that of its ideas, spiritualized in Shelley, and that of the common lot as represented in the sphere of the novel, spiritualized most notably in Victor Hugo. In our own country it is singular to observe that the democratic idea, though efficient in politics, does not yet establish itself in imaginative literature with any great power of brilliancy, does not create great democratic types, or in any way express itself adequately. This democratic idea, in Dickens for example, uses the experience of daily life, that is, contemporary history, or at least it uses an artistic arrangement of such experience; but the novel as a whole has given us in regard to the common lot, rather a description of life in its variety than that concentrated and essential significance of life which we call typical. If democracy in its future course should evolve such a typical and spiritualized embodiment of itself as chivalry found in Arthur and the Round Table, or as the heroic age of Greece found in Achilles and the Trojan War, or as the genius of Rome found in Aeneas and his fortunes, then imagination — race-imagination will be enriched by this fourth great instrument; but this is to cast the horoscope of too distant an hour. I introduce the thought only for the sake of including in this broad survey of race-imagination that experience of the present day, that history in the contemporary process of being transformed, out of which the mass of the books of the day is now made.

Let me recur now to that principle of selection which through the cumulative action of repeated preferences of phrase and image fixes a habit of choice which at last stamps the diction of a man, a school or an age. It is

plain that in what I have called the transformation of history, of which literature is the express image, there is the same principle of selection which, working through long periods of race-life, results at last in those idealities of persons and events in which inhere most powerfully those overtones of beauty, honor and righteousness that the race has found most precious both for idea and emotion; and to these are to be added what I have had no time to include and discuss, the idealities of persons and events found outside mythology, chivalry and Scripture, in the work of individual genius like Shakespeare, which nevertheless have the same ground in history, in experience, that in them is similarly transformed. Life-experience spiritualized is the formula of all great literature; it may range from the experience of a single life, like Sidney's in his sonnets to that of an empire in Virgil's "Aeneid," or of a religion in Dante's "Comedy." In either case the formula which makes it literature is the same. I have illustrated the point by the obvious spiritualizations of history. Race-life, from the point of view of literature, results at last in these molds of imagination, and all else though slowly, yet surely, drops away into oblivion. In truth, it is only by being thus spiritualized that anything human survives from the past. The rose, I said, has been so dipped in human experience that it is less a thing of nature than a thing of passion. In the same way Adonis, Jason and Achilles, Roland and Arthur, Lancelot, Percival and Galahad, Romeo and Hamlet have drawn into themselves such myriads of human lives by admiration and love that from them everything material, contemporary and mortal has been refined away, and they seem to all of us like figures moving in an immortal air. They have

achieved the eternal world. To do this is the work of art. It may seem a fantastic idea, but I will venture the saying of it, since to me it is the truth. Art, I suppose, you think of as the realm and privilege of selected men, of sculptors, painters, musicians, poets, men of genius and having something that has always been called divine in their faculty; but it appears to me that art, like genius, is something that all men share, that it is the stamp of the soul in every one, and constitutes their true and immaterial life. The soul of the race, as it is seen in history and disclosed by history, is an artist soul; its career is an artistic career; its unerring selective power expels from its memory every mortal element and perserves only the essential spirit, and thereof builds its ideal imaginative world through which it finds its true expression; its more perfect comprehension of the world is science, its more perfect comprehension of its own nature is love, its more perfect expression of its remembered life is art. Mankind is the grandest and surest artist of all, and history as it clarifies is, in pure fact, an artistic process, a creation in its fullness of the beautiful soul.

It appears, then, that the language of literature in the race is a perfected nature and a perfected manhood and a perfected divinity, so far as the race at the moment can see toward perfection. The life which literature builds up ideally out of the material of experience is not wholly a past life, but there mingles with it and at last controls it the life that man desires to live. Fullness of life — that fullness of action which is poured in the epic, that fullness of passion which is poured in the drama, that fullness of desire that is poured in the lyric — the life of which man knows himself capable and

realizes as the opportunity and hope of life — this is the life that literature enthrones in its dream. You have heard much of the will to believe and of the desire to live: literature is made of these two, warp and woof. Race after race believes in the gods it has come to know and in the heroes it has borne, and in what it wishes to believe of divine and human experience; and the life it thus ascribes to its gods and to its own past is that life it most ardently desires to live. Literature, which records this, is thus the chief witness to the nobility, the constancy and instancy of man's effort for perfection. What wonder, then, if in his sublimest and tenderest song there steals that note of melancholy so often struck by the greatest masters in the crisis and climax of their works, and which, when so struck, has more of the infinite in it, more of the human in it, than any other in the slowly triumphant theme!

To sum up — the language of literature is experience; the language of race-literature is race-experience, or history, the human use that the race has made of the world. The law appears to be that history in this sense is slowly transformed by a refining and spiritualizing process into an imaginative world, such as the world of mythology, chivalry or the Scriptures, and that this world in turn becomes emblematic and fades away into an expression of abstract truth. The crude beginning of the process is seen in our historical fiction; the height of it in Arthur or in Odin; the end of it in the symbolic or allegoric interpretation of even so human a book as Virgil's "Aeneid." Human desire for the best enters into this process with such force that the record of the past slowly changes into the prophecy of the future, and out of the passing away of what was is built the dream of what

shall be; so arises in race-life the creed of what man wishes to believe and the dream of the life he desires to live; this human desire for belief and for life is, in the final analysis, the principle of selection whose operation has been sketched, and on its validity rests the validity and truth of all literature.

III

THE TITAN MYTH

I

I PROPOSE now to illustrate by the specific example of the Titan Myth how it is that Greek mythology is a tongue of the imagination — a living tongue of the universal imagination of men.

The Titan Myth — I wonder what it means to you? The Titans were the earliest children of the earth, elder than the Greek gods even, and were the sons of the Earth, their mother. You perhaps think of them as mere giants, such as Jack killed — medieval monsters of the kin of Beauty and the Beast. Think of them rather as majestic forms, with something of the sweep and mystery of those figures you may remember out of Ossian and his misty mountains, with the largeness and darkness of the earth in them, a massive dim-featured race, but with an earthly rather than celestial grandeur, embodiments of mighty force dull to beauty, intelligence, light. When Zeus, the then young Olympian, was born, and with him the other deities of the then new divine world, and when he dethroned his father and put the new gods in possession of the universe, these children of the old régime, misliking change, took the father's part, and warred on the usurper of ancient power, and were overthrown by his lightnings, and mountains were piled on them; and now you may read in Longfellow of Enceladus, the type and image of their fate, buried under

Etna whose earthquakes are the struggling of the great Titan beneath. This was the war of the Titans and the gods. One of the Titans, however, stood apart from the rest, being wiser than they. Prometheus made friends with Zeus, but his fortune was not less grievous to him; for when he saw that Zeus took no account of men — "of miserable men," — but yearned to destroy them from the face of the earth, he took pity on mankind, and stole for them the celestial fire and gave it to them, for until then man had lived a life of mere nature, without knowledge, or any arts, not even that of agriculture. Prometheus was the fire-bringer; and, bringing fire, he brought to men all the uses of fire, such as metal-working, for example, and in a word he gave to mankind its entire career, the long labor of progressive civilization, and the life of the spirit itself which is kindled, as we say, from the Promethean spark within. It was but a step for the Pagan imagination, at a later stage, to think of this patron of mankind as the creator of men, since he was the fosterer of their lives; it was said that he had made clay images, and moistened these with holy water, so that they became living creatures — men. Zeus was angered by this befriending of the human race; and he flung Prometheus upon a mountain of the Caucasus, chained him there, and planted a vulture to eat always on his entrails; and in the imagination of men there he hangs to this day. Yet there was one condition on which he might be released and again received into heaven. He alone knew the secret of the fall of Zeus — the means by which it would be brought about; and if he would tell this secret, so that Zeus might avoid the danger as was possible, and thereby his unjust reign become perpetual, Prometheus might save himself. But

the Titan so loved justice that he kept silence, knowing that in the course of ages at last Zeus would fall. This was the myth of Prometheus.

Of the aspects which the entire legend presents in literature, there are three which stand out. I shall ask you to consider the first as the cosmic idea — the idea of the law of human progress that it contains. To the Greek mind the development of the universe consisted in the supplanting of a lower by a higher power, under the will of a supreme fate or necessity which was above both gods and men: after Uranus was Chronos, after Chronos was Zeus, after Zeus there would be other gods. The Greeks were themselves a higher power in their world, and as such had conquered the Persians; theirs was the victory of light over darkness, of civilization over barbarism, and therefore on the walls of their great temple, the Parthenon, which was the embodiment of their spiritual consciousness as a race, they depicted three great mythic events symbolizing the victory of the higher power — that is, the war of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ, of the Athenians and the Amazons, and of the gods and the Titans. This cosmic idea — the Greek conception of progress — it is more convenient to delay to the next lecture. Secondly, I shall ask you to consider the conception of the friend of man suffering for his sake — one that without irreverence may be designated as the Christ-idea. This phase of the myth naturally has received less development in literature, inasmuch as the ideas and emotions it embodies find expression inevitably and almost exclusively in the symbol of the Cross and the life that led up thereto. But for those who, in the chances of time have stood apart from the established faith of Christendom, and have not sel-

dom encountered the creed and practice of their age in persecution, being victims for the sake of reason — for these men, the figure of Prometheus has been in the place of the Cross, an image of themselves, their prototype. The expression of this particular idea, however, has been slight in literature; but it naturally appears there, and Prometheus has come to be the characteristic symbol of the peculiar suffering of genius; so Longfellow uses it in his "Prometheus."

> "All is but a symbol painted
> Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer;
> Only those are crowned and sainted
> Who with grief have been acquainted,
> Making nations nobler, freer."

Under this aspect Prometheus is the martyr of humanity. Thirdly, I shall ask you to consider the conception of Prometheus, not as an individual, but as identified with mankind, as mankind itself suffering in all its race-life and throughout its history, wretched, tyrannized over by some dark and unjust necessity, yet unterrified, resolute, invincible in its faith in that

> "One far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

The imagination, age after age, finds in Prometheus such a symbol of man's race-life. This is to conceive of Prometheus as the idea of humanity.

Æschylus fixed the form of the Titan for the imagination and surrounded it with the characteristic scene. He nailed Prometheus in chains riveted into the rock, the vast desolate cliffs of the Caucasus, an indistinct and mighty figure, frosted with the night and watching the stars in their courses with lidless eyes, the dark vulture

hovering in his bosom. Perhaps I can make the scene more real to you by a passage from a letter of a friend who last spring was in that solitude. "All the forenoon," he says, "I have been traveling forward beneath the giant wall of the frosty Caucasus. The snow-clad plain serves as a dazzling foreground to the towering rugged peaks so sharply defined in steel white and dull black wherever the snow leaves the beetling rock bare. The gorges and ravines which are here and there visible look like old-time scars of jagged wounds on the sullen face of the mountains. The dreary solitude of the scene is very impressive. Far off yonder in the distance I can picture the chill and desolate vulture-peak where Prometheus, in his galling chains, longed for the day to give peace to 'starry-kirtled night' (if I remember my Æschylus rightly) and yearned for the sun to arise and dispel the hoar-frost of dawn. It all comes up again before my mind in this far-away solitary region." Thither to this scene, that my friend describes, came with comfort or counsel the daughters of the Ocean, and old Oceanus himself, the Titan's brother, and Io on her wanderings, and Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, to make terms with Prometheus, or inflict new tortures should he refuse. But Prometheus remained the resolute and faithful sufferer; there stretched on the rock he would await the sure coming of that justice which is above even the heavens of Zeus and contains and orders even them. It is a sublime moral situation. Who could ever forget that figure, once stamped on his imagination, though but a schoolboy? So Byron remembered his Harrow days: "Of the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus," he says, "I was passionately fond as a boy. It was one of the Greek dramas we used to read three times a year at Harrow.

Indeed, it and the 'Medea' were the only ones, except the 'Seven Against Thebes,' which pleased me. The 'Prometheus,' if not exactly in my plan has always been so much in my head that I well understand how its influences have passed into all I have done." It goes with this acknowledgment, and bespeaks the critic's acute penetration, to find Jeffrey affirming that there is no work of modern literature that more than Byron's "Manfred" approaches the "Prometheus" of Æschylus. Byron only illustrates the fascination that this myth has for the race; the world will never let go of this symbol of itself.

The moment and the cause, the invincible resolution denying the will of the apparent gods of the hour in obedience to the higher light within, are the same that have nailed all martyrs to the cross, sent patriots to rot in prisons, and borne on the leaders of all forlorn hopes in their death-charges, and of these the history of the last century gives many a modern instance. In our own time Siberia has been one vast Caucasus; I remember when not long ago its name was Crete; and now it is Macedonia — they are all tracts of that desolation that swallows up in its voiceless solitude and buries from the ears of God and man the human cry. In the mind and memory of the race there are two great mountains; over against Sinai towers the peak of the Caucasus with perpetual challenge; yet they are twin peaks — one, the mount of faith in God, the other, the mount of faith in man. You know how the race, from time to time, as great moods sweep over it — the mood of asceticism, or of Christian chivalry, or of world conquest, sets up some historic figure as the type and expression of this mood — some St. Francis, or Philip Sidney, or Napoleon;

this is because the race sees in these men a greater image of itself in those particular moods. So, in a more abstract way the race takes some part of its self-consciousness — say, its perception of what is evil in its own heart — and puts it outside of itself so as to see it better, projects or objectifies itself, as we say, in an image, like Mephistopheles; it sees in Mephistopheles itself in a certain mood — a mood of mocking denial of all good. So, in its own history and memory the race perceives that often its greatest men, those who have been its civilizers, have been victims of the powers of their day, and have served the race and carried on its life by fidelity to their own hearts and the truth in them in spite of the utmost suffering that could be inflicted on them. The race thinks of these men as constituting its own life, gathers and blends them in one being and finds that being — the type that stands for its continuous life — in Prometheus. In him the race projects — as I have said — or objectifies itself in the mood of suffering the worst for the good of men, with undismayed courage and unbroken will. Prometheus is man as he knows himself in history, the immortal sufferer under injustice bringing even by his sorrows the higher justice that shall at last prevail — he is this figure set clear and separate before the mind: he is the idea of humanity, conceived in the characteristic act of its noblest life — he is mankind.

I dwelt in the last lecture on the treasure that the race-imagination possesses in the Greek myths, as a means of expression; in the whole inheritance of our literature there is nothing that the poet finds so great a gift as these forms and tales of the mythic world in which the work of creation is already half done for him, and the

storing of ideas and emotions has been accomplished, so that with a word he can release in the mind the flood of meaning they contain, as if he pushed an electric button; they are to him what the common law is to a lawyer — the stored results of the past, in experience and principle; he has only to adopt them into his human verse, as he adopts into his verse of nature the Andes and Ararat. It was not surprising that such a tale as the Titan Myth should be among the chief memories of the race, never wholly forgotten; yet it waited for its moment. After the first mention of it in literature three thousand years went by, before the moment came. Then the French Revolution struck its hour. It is true that the myth stirred in the Renaissance when all things Greek revived, and Calderon, the great Spanish poet, treated some minor aspects of it; but, in and about the Revolution, it was handled repeatedly by great poets who strove to recast the story and use it to express the ideas and emotions of their own age. Goethe in his youth, and the Germans — Herder and Schlegel, each wrote a Prometheus; in Italy Monti took the subject; in England Landor and Byron touched it lightly, and Keats and Shelley made it the matter of great poems; and later, in France, where Voltaire had approached it, Victor Hugo and Edgar Quinet elaborated it; nor do these names exhaust the list of those who in the last century made it a principal theme of verse. This re-birth was a natural one; for the French Revolution, which you remember Wendell Phillips in his great Harvard speech described as "the most unmixed blessing that ever befell mankind" — the French Revolution was rooted in the idea of humanity and was the cause of humanity. Moreover, the Revolution has a Titanic quality in itself; there

is the feeling of large earth-might in the struggle of the heavy masses of the darkened people, peasant-born; and in their revolt against the kingdoms of the world whose serfs they were, there was the sense of a strife with the careless luxury of the unjust gods; there was in the wretchedness of the European peoples the state of man that Prometheus pitied when he rebuked Zeus for taking no account of men — "of miserable men"; and in the tumult and ardor and invincible faith of the Revolution there was both the Titanic atmosphere and the Promethean spirit. Shelley was the poet through whom the literary expression of the Revolution was to be poured. It is necessary to mark the time precisely. The Revolution had flamed, and in Napoleon, whom more than one poet celebrated as the Prometheus of the age, had apparently flamed out. The Revolution, as a political idea, seemed to have failed, and Europe sank back into the arms of king and priest. It was then that these great Englishmen, Byron and Shelley, in their youth took up the fallen cause and bore it onward in their hands till Byron died for it in the war of Greek Independence and Shelley, having sung his song, sank in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

Shelley came to this subject naturally and through years of unconscious preparation; and when the moment of creation came, he felt the Titanic quality, that I spoke of, in the Revolution, felt the Promethean security of victory it contained — felt, too, the Promethean suffering which was the heart of mankind as he saw it surveying Europe in his day, and knew it in his own bosom as well. He conceived of Prometheus as mankind, of his history and fate as the destiny of man; and being full of that far sight of Prometheus which saw

the victorious end — being as full of it as the wheel of Ezekiel was full of eyes — he saw, as the center of all vision, Prometheus Unbound — the millennium of mankind. He imagined the process of that great liberation and its crowning prosperities. This is his poem. In this poem the Revolution as a moral idea reached its height; that is what makes it, from the social point of view, the race-point of view, the greatest work of the last century in creative imagination — for it is the summary and center, in the world of art, of the greatest power in that century — the power of the idea of humanity. I shall present only the cardinal phases of the dramatic situation, in the poem, and of the moral idea by which it is solved.

The poem opens in the Caucasus, with Prometheus bound to the rock, an indistinct figure such as I have described him; his form is left undefined — he is a voice in the vast solitudes; and his first speech, which discloses the situation, makes you aware of physical suffering, mental anguish, an undismayed and patient will, an unconquerable faith — these are the qualities which make him an elemental being and characterize him at once. It is an Æschylean speech, phrases from Æschylus are welded into it; but the moral grandeur of Prometheus — all, that is, except the historical and physical features of the scene — bears the creative mark of Shelley's own sublimity of conception.

"Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,

And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope;
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair — these are mine empire:
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

"No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

"The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.

"And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-colored east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
— As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim —
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through the wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak."

Prometheus's character, you observe, is developed in the point that he no longer hates Zeus, but is filled with pity for him. Later in the scene the Furies enter, to torture the Titan with new torments. What torments will be the most piercing to the suffering spirit of man — the spirit that suffers in advancing human welfare? Will it not be the fact that the gifts he has given man have

proved evil gifts, and that in the effort for perfection man has but the more heaped on himself damnation? The thought is found in many treatments of the myth: Themis warned Prometheus that in aiding man with fire and the arts he only increased man's woes. It is the old pessimistic thought that civilization is a curse — that the only growth of the soul is growth in the capacity for pain, for disillusion, for despair. Shelley introduces it in quite the Promethean spirit — as a thing, which if it be, is to be borne. What were the two characteristic failures of human hope in Shelley's eyes? The capital instances? They were the failure of Christianity to bring the millennium, and the failure of the French Revolution in the same end — and not only their failure to bring the millennium, but, on the contrary, their influence in still further confounding the state of mankind and flooding the nations with new miseries. The Furies show these two failures to Prometheus in vision. The passage is somewhat involved as the vision is successively disclosed through the words of the chorus of Furies, of the attendant sisters Ione and Panthea, and of Prometheus, but I will endeavor to make it plain:

"Chorus

"The pale stars of the morn
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.
One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

Look! where round the wide horizon
Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair!
'T is his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled:
Look again, the flames almost
To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.
Joy, joy, joy!
Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

"Semichorus I

"Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;
To Truth its state is dedicate,
And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
A legioned band of linkèd brothers
Whom Love calls children —

"Semichorus II

" 'T is another's:
See how kindred murder kin:
'T is the vintage time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[All the Furies vanish, except one]

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.

Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?
PANTHEA. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.
IONE. What didst thou see?
PANTHEA. A woful sight: a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.
IONE. What next?
PANTHEA. The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.
FURY. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.
PROMETHEUS. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
Some — Hear I not the multitude laugh loud? —
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
By the red light of their own burning homes.
FURY. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.
PROMETHEUS. Worse?

FURY. In each human heart terror survives
The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
All that they would disdain to think were true:
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
They dare not devise good for man's estate,
And yet they know not that they do not dare.
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
And all best things are thus confused to ill.
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.
PROMETHEUS. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.
FURY. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [VANISHES]
PROMETHEUS Ah woe!
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.
PANTHEA. Alas! what sawest thou?
PROMETHEUS There are two woes:
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear.
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw."

The victory of Prometheus is in his declaration that he pities those who are not tortured by such scenes. He had already disclosed this pitiful heart in his first speech; and, desiring to hear the curse he had originally launched on Zeus, and being gratified in this wish by the Earth, he had revoked it:

> "It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
> Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
> I wish no living thing to suffer pain."

Thus he had forgiven his great enemy.

As I read the play, this forgiveness of Zeus by Prometheus makes the predestined hour of the downfall of Zeus. The chariot bears aloft the new principle of supreme being, a higher and younger-born principle, which exceeds that which Zeus embodied, just as Zeus had in his birth been a higher principle than the old reign contained; and Zeus is flung headlong, like Lucifer, into the abyss of past things. Thus Shelley, as is the universal way of genius, had created a great work by fusing in it two divergent products of the human spirit — the Hellenic idea of a higher power superseding the lower, and the Christian idea that this power was one of non-resistance, of forgiveness, of love. The reign of love now begins in the poem: Prometheus is released and wedded with Asia, who stands for the spirit of nature, in which marriage is typified the union of the human soul with nature, the harmony of man and nature, and he shares in the millennium which is thus established on earth.

At the end, you observe, the Titan Myth drops away; it does not appear in the last acts; for in it there was no such completion of the Promethean faith as Shelley describes.

And here I might end the discussion of Shelley's handling of the myth; but I cannot refrain from directing your attention to the marvelous power of the myth which could so blend the Greek and Christian genius, and contain the passion of the French Revolution issuing in the highest and most extreme forms of Christian ethics — in non-resistance, that is, and in the forgiveness of enemies. I say nothing of the practical wisdom of this doctrine; what is it, but the old verses?

"But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also:"

but I desire that you should identify this wisdom with its moment of utterance. The French Revolution — the Revolution of the Terror and the block, of the burnt chateaux and the Napoleonic wars, was over and done with; Shelley, in whom its spirit burnt as the pure flame, had rejected its methods, while holding to its ideals. He had lifted it from a political to a moral cause: he had abandoned the sword as its Evangel, and he put persuasion in the place of force, and love in the place of hate, and the genius of victory which he invoked was the conversion of society by the stricken cheek and the lost cloak. The idea of humanity was the fountain of his thought and the armor of his argument. I will not refrain from saying that the idea of a suffering humanity, which finds the path of progress in invincible opposition to the ruling gods of the hour in the faith in greater divinities to come, is properly crowned and consecrated by this doctrine, that patient forgiveness of the wrong is the essence of victory over it, and the sure road to its downfall. But the significance of such a myth

is not to be exhausted by one poet, or by one treatment; and in my next lecture I shall take up the work of Keats, Goethe, Herder, and Schlegel, in interpreting life, as they conceived it, by the same formula.

I have left myself a moment to bring forward two considerations which may prove suggestive. The first is the analogy between Hebrew and Greek myths in the point that whereas in Eden the eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, whereby man became as God, was the occasion of man's ills, so in the myth of Greece the sharing of men in the divine fire was the cause of the sorrows of civilization. The second is that in the drama of the Book of Job there is a strong likeness to the situation in Prometheus, in the point that there is no action, but only a passive suffering in the principal character; and that in this suffering there is a dissent from the wisdom of Divine ways; that Job holds to his integrity and faith in his own righteousness in the face of all disaster and all argument, in quite the Promethean spirit, obdurately; and that he has the Promethean faith in the issue. The situation lies in the verse:

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain my ways before him."

The dignity of the human soul is dramatically upheld at the great climax of Job's final assertion of his righteousness; and the situation is solved only by the voice from the whirlwind declaring that as nature is a mystery, much more must human life find mystery as an element of its being. But in this great drama — one of the marvelous works of human genius — though there is the presence of unjust suffering, of human integrity, and of a final victory of the right — there is no such clear presen-

tation of the idea and its operation, as is found in the Promethean legend — the idea formulated in this myth by the race out of its knowledge of its own life, not as a dramatic incident such as Job's, but as a pervading and constant law — the idea that the progress of man lies in an immortal suffering, an invincible endurance of the injustice of the present world, in anticipation of the absolute justice known only to the prophetic heart within. This idea is a natural product of man's reflection on his history, a natural interpretation of his experience; and he finds it imaginatively embodied in Prometheus more adequately and humanly than elsewhere. It has entered into thousands of lives in this century of the Revolution, with both illumination and courage; sharing in this idea, and the life which is led in obedience to it, the humblest of men shares in the sublimity of the great Titan.

IV

THE TITAN MYTH

II

The importance of history in literature can hardly be emphasized too much. I have not hesitated to speak of mythology and chivalry, and even of the Scriptures, as transformations of history, and of imaginative literature as the spiritual after-life both of historical events and conditions in the narrow sense, and of general human experience in the broad sense. I have directed attention also to the influence of history in a more direct way, in the literature of the last century — to its inspirational power there; out of it came, in particular, the picturesqueness of the historical novel; and, inasmuch as the romantic spirit of the century explored all lands and times for new material, and eagerly absorbed all that travel or research brought forward new to the European mind, it naturally happened that the conception of historical humanity became one of rich variety; the formula — "many men, many minds" — received unending illustration, and it might be thought that the result would have been to impress on the race a sense of hopeless diversity in its members rather than of unbroken unity. But history had this inspirational power, not only in literature, but in philosophy; the mind of man was stimulated to find in all this new mass of different detail a single principle that would explain and reconcile the ap-

parent confusion — to frame, that is, a philosophy of history. Herder, the German writer, was one of the most influential of the great men who attacked this problem; he gave his life to it. At the dawn of a new age, you know, there is often a singular phenomenon: men of genius arise, with a poetical cast of mind, and they are prophetic of the new day because they show forth some single idea or mood of it though they do not grasp the whole; they catch like morning clouds, some the red, some the gold, some the purple ray, but none of them gives that one white light which will prevail when the day is fully come. An outburst of poetry — the prevalence of a poetical view of things — is the sign of an advance along the whole line. Herder was a man of this kind; and it is easy now to say that his method was imperfectly scientific, and that his imagination and desire led him astray. Nevertheless he had one of those minds which, if it does not build a system squared of solid timber, flings seeds on every wind like a living tree. His intellect was capacious, and in the attempt he made to include all things in his philosophizing he seems an anticipation of Herbert Spencer; in his theorizing, too, students find innumerable thoughts — that are half-guesses — which are almost the words of Darwin. He was, thus, you see, in the true path of advance; he caught the first gleams of the new hour of time. He was interested over and above all else, in humanity and its destiny as [illegible] history. He saw in history the working of a law of beneficence and justice, which though it might not seem such when viewed in its means, always and unfailingly is such when viewed in its end; thus from the concourse and struggle of forces in civilization there is always issuing the slow triumph of reason. This was

what Herder conceived as the law of progress; and is the view taken in his leading prose works, the "Ideas on the History of Mankind" and the "Letters for the Furtherance of Humanity," which are still great and fruitful books. At the very end of a life spent thus in meditation on the career of man in civilization, Herder set forth his faith in the principle of progress in a series of dramatic scenes built out of the myth of Prometheus. He identified the fire which was the Titan's characteristic gift to mortals, as civilization, and saw in it the two-fold symbol — first, of the arts themselves, secondly, of that divine soul which restlessly excites and spurs on all the powers of man.

I will sketch very briefly the story as Herder tells it. Prometheus has been long chained to the rock and (as in Shelley's poem) time has ripened and softened his heart, partly because he knows that his work is prospering among men. In the first scene he hears a distant song of victory, and voices announces to him that reason fructifies the earth. In later scenes, first the daughters of the Ocean and old Oceanus himself come complaining that mankind disturbs the sea with ships, changes the course of the waters by dams and canals, and brings the ends of the earth together with commerce; but Prometheus replies, prophesying: —

"The sea which girds the earth shall be the mediator and peace-maker of the nations."

Then the Dryads, daughters of the earth, come with a similar tale; but Prometheus tells them that in the end man will make a garden of the earth; and other mythological characters enter, each with its tale, Ceres, the goddess of harvest, who works with man — and Bac-

chus, the giver of the vine; at last Hercules and Theseus release the Titan, all go before Themis, the goddess of justice who judges the cause between Prometheus and the gods, and gives the decision for Prometheus. Pallas then leads to Prometheus Agatia, the pure spirit of humanity, and the drama ends. You see the work is little more than a series of picturesque classical tableaux, in which the victory of man through reason is set forth with a maintenance of self-sacrifice, perseverance, patience, social labor and love as the essential elements of the moral ideal.

A few years before, Schlegel had produced a Prometheus in the form of a poem, in the same realm of history but with much less scenic elaboration. In it he describes the Golden Age before the Titan War, the desolate state of man after Zeus came to the throne, and how Prometheus made of clay a new race, and animated the clay with the heavenly fire. Themis reproves him for this act, and foretells the sorrows of this Promethean man — this being of divine desire chained to the earth and tyrannized over by the thought of the past and of the future alike. But Prometheus believes, he says, that good will not die, that the toil of one generation will help the next, that human will reduces life to order and human action subdues nature; and that out of the midst of opposing principles civilization grows to more and more. The law of progress is stated with sure optimism: though there may be ages of terror and apparent degeneration, yet the immortal principle of good in the race is such that it passes invulnerable through all history, and accomplishes the work of civilization. The poem is no more than a reply to the sad prophecy of Themis, and perhaps incidentally to such reactionaries

as saw in the Reign of Terror and the Revolution generally the denial of progress and of the social ideal.

But in the sphere of history, one of the latest reworkings of the myth, the Prometheus of Quinet, the French poet, contains the most interesting variation. He conceived firmly the unity of history; and in obedience to this conception he endeavored to unite the Greek myth with Christianity, not ethically as Shelley did, but historically. "If Prometheus" — he says in his preface — "is the eternal prophet, as his name indicates, each new age of humanity can put new oracles in the mouth of the Titan. Perhaps there is no character so well fitted to express the feelings — the premature and half melancholy desires — in which our age is enchained." In this spirit he wrote a drama in three parts: the first depicts the creation of man by Prometheus, the gift of fire — that is, the soul — and the beginning of life in sorrow. The second part depicts the suffering of Prometheus on Caucasus, in which the foreknowledge of the fall of Zeus becomes a prophecy of Christ's coming. The third act depicts the advent of Christianity. The Archangels, Raphael and Michael descend on Caucasus, and release Prometheus, who rises transfigured; the gods of Olympus prostrate themselves before him and the angels, and pray in vain for life. Then Prometheus has a singular thought which to me is the most dramatic in the play: as he listens to the death-song of the gods, his mind is clouded with a doubt — will not the new divinity also pass away? — and does he not already see a new Caucasus before him in the distant time? — will he not be bound again? — The angels comfort him, and he ascends to heaven; but as he disappears in that hierarchy of celestial peace and love, he still wears the shadow of thought

— for he remembers that on earth men still suffer. This attempt at a true synthesis of the Greek and Christian imagination — in behalf of the unity of history — is a most interesting illustration of the spirit of the century; which was on the whole a century of peace-making between the great historic elements of spiritual civilization, a drawing together and harmonizing of religions, philosophies and half-developed and fragmentary doctrines, by virtue of the identical principle they contain; or as Herder said, in consequence of that symmetry of human reason which makes all nobler minds tend to think the same thoughts.

Interesting as the historical point of view is, it is plain that the myth loses something of its poetical quality, becomes pure allegory, becomes almost mechanical; it becomes, in fact, what is called poetical machinery, a hard and fast means of figurative expression. The characters in Herder and Schlegel move like marionettes, and you hear the voice of the author apart from his work. Let us turn to a mind in which the myth really was alive again, with creative as well as expressive power — the mind of Keats. In his "Hyperion," the tale is of the Titans immediately after their overthrow; they have been dethroned from power, Saturn is an exile hiding in the deep glens, but their ruin is still incomplete; Hyperion still is lord in the sun, and the others are at liberty to gather for a great council. In order to display the idea of Keats, let me approach it indirectly. The point of view which he takes has much affinity with science — more, that is, than with either history or ethics. Modern theories of evolution have accustomed our minds to the conception of an original state of the universe, vast, homogeneous, undiversified, simple; out of this — to

adopt the nebular theory — slowly great masses conglomerated, gathered into sun and planets; and out of these arose finally living things on a smaller scale but of higher perfection of being. Now if you will think of man's progressive conceptions of the divinity as something similar to this, as parallel to it, you will have Keats's idea. In the beginning were the vast, vague, undefined, half-unconscious beings, like Uranus, the heavens, and Gaia, the earth, and Chronos, time; to them succeeded the more conscious and half-humanized brood of the Titans, like the sun and planets, as it were; last came the gods of Olympus, in the perfection of full humanity, and on the physical scale of man in form, feature and spirit. The change from the Titanic to the Olympian rule, was like the change from one geological age of vast forms of brute and vegetable life to another of smaller but nobler species. The higher principle displaces the lower, according to that Greek idea of progress which I have described; and this successive displacement of the lower by the higher is the law of development in the Universe.

In Keats's poem, Oceanus, speaking to the Titans in council as the wisest of them all, sets forth the matter plainly, and I should like you to notice how the conception of a progressive order in nature (not as hitherto in civilization merely) and the conception of the necessity of accepting truth, bear the mark of the scientific spirit. Oceanus thus speaks: —

> "We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
> Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
> Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
> But for this reason, that thou art the King,
> And only blind from sheer supremacy,

One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be,
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 't is pain;
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs

Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 't is the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might:
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire; farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye, and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

It appears, then, that the new principle of being, in whose advent lay the ruin of the old world, is beauty.

" 'T is the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might."

This is, as you know, Keats's distinctive mark — the perception and adoration of beauty. What love was to Shelley, that beauty was to Keats — the open door to divinity; he saw life as a form of beauty. And he means what he says — not that beauty has strength as an added quality, but that beauty is strength, and reigns in its own right. This rise of the Olympians was beauty's moment of birth in the minds of men; this birth was a revelation, like a new religion, and it is presented as such by Keats in a two-fold way. First it is a revelation to the Titans. You have seen how Oceanus on beholding the new god

of the sea, gave up the rule over it. So Clymene, who describes herself —

"O Father, I am here the simplest voice" —

tells her experience:

"I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathèd from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthèd shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody —
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried, 'Apollo!' "

Beauty is also a revelation to the gods themselves in their own bosoms where it has sprung into life. The passage in which Apollo's awakening is described — full of a poet's personal touches of his own experience in coming into possession of himself — is one of the most impassioned in all Keats's writing:

"Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the numerous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffusèd eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:
'How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed form
Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and, all that face,
Or I have dream'd.' — 'Yes,' said the supreme shape,

'Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is 't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born.' — Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables: — 'Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefor I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings. — O why should I
Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,

And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendor pant with bliss
I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
Mute thou remainest. — Mute! yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal.' — Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd;
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied. — At length
Apollo shriek'd; — and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial. . . ."

The birth-cry of Apollo was the death-cry of Keats: there the golden pen fell from his hands, and the poem — a fragment — ends.

There is one detail in Keats's work, which though it is subsidiary, deserves mention because it completes the reality of the Titan Myth in an important way. In all the other writers, whom I have named, you do not get any idea of the Titans physically, you do not see them as Titans. In Shelley, and the rest, Prometheus is essentially a man; he has human proportion; in Keats Prometheus does not appear at all. But Keats has realized the Titanic figures to the imagination as distinct and noble forms; they have the massiveness of limb and immobility of feature that we associate with Egyptian art, with the Sphinxes and the Memnons; yet each is characterized differently; Saturn, Oceanus, Enceladus, Thea, Mnemosyne are individualized, and especially Hyperion is set forth, in ways of grandeur. The subject would require more illustration than I can now give it; but let me cite the very remarkable figure which is found in the second version of "Hyperion," a version that is as full of Dante as the first one is of Milton. The figure is that of Moneta, the solitary and ageless priestess of the temple of the Titans, "sole goddess of its desolation," who gives the poet the vision of the past.

"And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its blood.
This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd
By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage; it had past
The lily and the snow; and beyond these

I must not think now, though I saw that face.
But for her eyes I should have fled away;
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft, mitigated by divinest lids
Half-clos'd, and visionless entire they seem'd
Of all external things; they saw me not,
But in blank splendor beam'd like the mild moon,
Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
What eyes are upward cast."

A similar imaginative power to that shown here pervades Keats's conceptions of the Titans, and distinguishes his work from all others as a creation in the visible world of the imagination such as is not elsewhere to be found. Here only is the Titan world made nobly real.

I fear to weary you with this long catalogue of the various modern forms of the Titan Myth, but it is necessary to develop the theme. I must say at least a word about Goethe's "Prometheus." It is only a brief fragment of a drama, and belongs to his youth. He was but twenty-four when he experimented with it. In the scenes which we possess, Prometheus is the maker of the clay images to which he gives life by the aid of Pallas — that is, really, by his own intelligence. He launches them as men in the career of civilization by declaring to them the principle of property; he tells one to build a house, and to the question whether it will be for the man himself or for everybody, Prometheus answers it shall be the man's own private possession and dwelling; he declares also the principle of retaliatory justice, saying on the occasion of the first theft, that he whose hand is against every one, every one's hand shall be against him; and he announces the fact and meaning of the first death. The drama does not proceed further. Its significance lies in two points; in the first place it is easy to see in Prome-

theus's attitude toward his clay images and his language about them a reflection of the young poet's own state of mind toward the mental beings whom he creates — a reflection, that is, of the pride and glory of genius in imaginary creation. Secondly, and more importantly, the drama exhibits the intense desire of the young Goethe for complete individual independence. In the answer Prometheus makes to the messenger of Zeus, who remonstrates with him, the central point is that Prometheus feels he is a god like Zeus, and wants freedom to do his will in his own realm as Zeus does in Olympus. Let Zeus keep his own, and let me keep my own, he says; he would rather his clay images should never live than be subjects of Zeus, for being still unborn, they are still free; liberty is the true good, and men, made by him, shall be embodiments of his own independent spirit. In all this is the prophecy of Goethe's own life. To me Goethe is the type of the man who wants to be let alone; and he accomplished his desire in a supremely selfish tranquillity, in which he used life to develop himself, sacrificed all things to himself, was at once the model and the condemnation of self-culture so pursued. In his young Prometheus there is this impatient cry for individual liberty, as a basis of life; and I discern little else significant in it. I must also spare a word for Victor Hugo's "Titan." The poem is in the "Legend of the Ages." This Titan is not Prometheus, or any other individual Titan, but is all of them in one, the giant, conceived as *one*. He is, of course, mankind — earth-born man, conceived as in scientific history, burrowing his way out of the planet itself — a massive medieval creature, gross and violent, tearing his path through cave and grotto, till at last he emerges and sees the stars.

This giant is clearly a symbol of man rising from his crude earthliness of nature and barbaric ages up to the sight and knowledge of the heavenly world. It is a type of progress, as science and history jointly conceive the evolution of humanity.

I have sufficiently illustrated how the Titan Myth in its variety has been employed to embody and express the idea of a progressive humanity in many aspects as it has appeared to different poets. The idea of progress is in our civilization a continuing and universal idea; and Prometheus is a continuing and universal image of its nature — the race-image of a race-idea. The Promethean situation is inherent in the law of human progress, however viewed, whether historically or scientifically or ethically, or in any other way. Emerson says

> "The fiend that man harries,
> Is Love of the Best."

The dream of this Best, and the will to bring it down to earth — the struggle with the temporary ruling worse that is in the world and must be dethroned — the proud and resolute suffering of all that such a present world can inflict — the faith in the final victory, are the Promethean characteristics; but the human spirit, in the nature of the case, must forever be in bonds; its successive liberations are partial only, and in the disclosure of a forever fairer dream in the future, lies also the disclosure of new bonds, for the present is always a state of chains in view of the to-morrow; and for man there is always to-morrow. The great words that seem the keys of progress, such as reason, love, beauty, are only symbols of an infinite series in life — a series that never ends. Such is the abstract statement that progress involves the

idea of humanity as a Promethean sufferer. But the race, which requires picturesque and vivid images of its highest faith, hope and thought, comes to its poets, like the human child, and says ever and ever — "Tell me a story: tell me a story about myself." And the poet tells the race a new story about itself — like the mother of Marius when she told him of "the white bird which he must bear in his bosom across the crowded market-place — his soul." Each poet tells this new story to the child about itself — a story it did not know before, and the child believes the story and increases knowledge and life with it. The question the race asks, in this Myth, is "what is most divine in me?" "What is the god in me?" — and Shelley answers, it is all-enduring and all-forgiving love toward all; and Herder answers that it is reason, Keats that it is beauty, Goethe that it is liberty, and Hugo that it is immense triumphant toil; and each in giving his answer tells the story of the old gods and the younger gods, and the wise Titan who knew yet other gods that should come. And the race listens to these tales because it hears in them its own voice speaking. Men of genius are men, like other men; but their genius, if I may use an obvious comparison, is like the reflector in front of the light-house flame — in all directions but one it is a common flame, but in that one direction along which the reflector magnifies, glorifies and speeds its radiance, it is the shining of a great light. Look at men of genius, as you find them in biography, and they seem ordinary persons of daily affairs; but if you can catch sight of genius through that side which is turned out to the infinite as to a great ocean, you will see, I will not say the man himself, but the use God makes of the man. That use is to reveal ourselves to ourselves, to

show what human nature is and can do, to unlock our minds, our hearts, all our energies, for use. We admire and love such men because they are more ourselves than we are, the undeveloped, often unknown selves that in us are but partially born. "What is most divine in me?" is the question the race puts; and perhaps it is true (though the statement may be startling), that as soon as man discovers a god in himself, all external gods fall from their thrones — and this is the meaning of the myth. But again, what is this but the old verse —

"The kingdom of heaven is within you?"

That realized, the old gods may go their ways. It is realized, perhaps, for one of its modes, in this way: that as the being of beauty is entire and perfect in the grass that flourishes for a summer, or in the rose of dawn that fades even while it blossoms, so the power of moral ideas enters, entire and perfect, into our being, and, as I said, the humblest of men suffering for man's good as he conceives it shares in the moral sublimity of Prometheus. What is thus within man — the thing that is most divine — is certainly the medium by which man approaches the divinity, and through which he beholds it, in any living way. It belongs to Puritanism, as a mood of mind, to be impatient of any external thing between the soul and the divinity; it will have the least of any such material element in its spiritual sight and communion; it sees God by an inner vision. Mediums of some sort there must be between human nature and its idea of the divine; and it seems to me that our inner vision by which the Puritan spirit reaches outward and upward is the vision of imagination transfiguring history to saints and martyrs in their holy living

and holy dying, transfiguring all human experience to the idealities of poetry. Mankind seeing itself more perfect in St. Francis, in Philip Sidney, in all men of spiritual genius, makes them a part of this inner vision — and, rank over rank, above them the perfection of Arthur and Parsifal, and still more high the perfection of reason, beauty, and love in their element. In this hierarchy of human daring, dreaming, desiring is the only beatific vision that human eyes ever immediately beheld — the vision of what is most divine in man. What I maintain is that, humanly speaking, in the search for God one path by which the race moves on is through this inner vision of ideal perfections in its own nature and its own experience, which it has fixed and illuminated in these imaginative figures, these race-images of race-ideas.

V

SPENSER

The general principle which I have endeavored to set forth in the first four lectures is that mankind in the process of civilization stores up race-power, in one or another form, so that it is a continually growing fund; and that literature, pre-eminently, is such a store of spiritual race-power, derived originally from the historical life or from the general experience of men, and transformed by imagination so that all which is not necessary falls away from it and what is left is truth in its simplest, most vivid and vital form. Thus I instanced mythology, chivalry, and the Scriptures as three such sifted deposits of the past; and I illustrated the use poetry makes of such race-images and race-ideas by the example of the myth of the Titans. In the remaining four lectures I desire to approach the same general principle of the storing of race-power from the starting-point of the individual author — to set forth Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth and Shelley, not in their personality but as race-exponents, and to show that their essential greatness and value are due to the degree in which they availed themselves of the race-store. You may remember that I defined education for all men as the process of identifying oneself with the race-mind, entering into and taking possession of the race-store; and the rule is the same for men of genius as for other men. You find, consequently, that the greatest poets have always been the best scholars of their times

— not in the encyclopedic sense that they knew everything, but in the sense that they possessed the living knowledge of their age, so far as it concerns the human soul in its history. They have always possessed what is called the academic mind — that is, they had a strong grasp on literary tradition and the great thoughts of mankind, and the great forms which those thoughts had taken on in the historic imagination. Virgil is a striking example of such a poet, perfectly cultivated in all the artistic, philosophic, literary tradition as it then was: Dante and Chaucer are similar instances; and, in English, Spenser, Milton, Gray, Shelley and Tennyson continue the line of those poets in whom scholarship — the academic tradition — is an essential element in their worth. It ought not to be necessary to bring this out so clearly; for it is obvious that men of genius, in the process of absorbing the race-store, by the very fact become scholarly men, men of intellectual culture, though in consequence of their genius they neglect all culture except that which still has spiritual life in it. This is so elementary a truth in literature that the index to the importance of an author is often his representative power — the degree to which he sums up and delivers the human past. How large a tract of time, what extent of knowledge, what range of historical emotion — does his mind drain? These are initial questions. And in literary history, you know, there are here and there minds, so central to the period, such meeting points of different ages and cultures, that they resemble those junctions on a railway map which seem to absorb all geography into their own black dots. The greatest poets are just such centers of spiritual history; where ancient and modern meet, where classicism and medievalism, Christianity

and paganism, Renaissance and Reformation and Revolution *meet* — there is the focus, for the time being, of the soul of man; and it is at that point that genius develops its transcendent power.

Spenser was such a mind. I spoke in the first lecture of that law of progress which involves the passing away of a civilization at the moment of its perfection and the death of that breed of men who have brought it to its height. Spenser was the poet of a dying race and a dying culture; in his work there is reflected and embodied a climax in the spiritual life of humanity to which imagination gives form, beauty, and passion. In this respect I am always reminded of Virgil when I read him; for Virgil used, like Spenser, the romanticism of a receding past to express his sense of human life, and he was related to his materials in much the same way. The Myth of Arthur lay behind Spenser as the Myth of Troy lay behind Virgil in the mist of his country's origins; the Italians of the Renaissance, Ariosto, and Tasso, were a school for Spenser much as the Alexandian poets had been for Virgil; and as in Virgil mythology and Homeric heroism and the legend of the antique Italian land before Rome blended in one, and became the last flowering of the pre-Christian world in what is, perhaps, the greatest of all world-poems, the "Æneid," so in Spenser chivalry, medievalism and the new birth of learning in Europe blended, and gave us a world-poem of the Christian soul, in which medieval spirituality — as it seems to me — expired. Spenser resembled Virgil, too, in his moment; he was endeavoring to create for England a poem such as Italy possessed in Ariosto's and Tasso's epics, to introduce into his country's literature the most supreme poetic art then in the world, just as Virgil

was attempting to instill into the Roman genius the imaginative art of Greece. He resembled Virgil again in his poetic education inasmuch as he formed his powers and first exercised them in pastoral verse, in the "Shepheard's Calendar" as Virgil did in his "Eclogues"; and he resembled Virgil still more importantly in that his theme was the greatest known to him — namely, the empire of the soul, as Virgil's was the empire of Rome. Spenser, then, when he came to his work is to be looked on as a master of all literary learning, a pioneer and planter of poetic art in his own country, and a poet who used the world of the receding past as his means of expressing what was most real to him in human life.

The work by which he is remembered is "The Faerie Queene," and in it all that I have said meets you at the threshold. Perhaps the first, and certainly the abiding impression the poem makes, is of its remoteness from life. Remoteness, you know, is said to be a necessary element in any artistic effect — such as you feel in looking at Greek statues or Italian Madonnas or French landscapes. This remoteness of the artistic world the poem has, in large measure: its country is no physical region known to geography, but is that land of the plain where Knights are always pricking, of forests and streams and hills that have no element of composition, and especially of a horizon like the sea's, usually lonely, but where anything may appear at any time: it is a land like a dream; and what takes place there at any moment is pictorial, and can be painted. But the quality of remoteness, so noticeable in the poem and to which I refer, is not that of artistic atmosphere and setting. It arises largely from the remoteness of history in the poem,

felt in the constant presence of outworn things, of bygone characters, ways and incidents; and the impression of intricacy that the poem also makes at first, the sense of confusion in it, is partly due to this same presence of the unfamiliar in most heterogeneous variety. This miscellaneousness is the result of Spenser's comprehensive inclusion in the poem of all he knew, that is, of the entire literary tradition of the race within his ken. Thus you find, at the outset, Aristotle's scheme of the moral virtues, and Plato's doctrine of the unity of beauty and wisdom, on the philosophical side; and for imagery out of the classics, here are Pluto, Proserpina, and Night, the house of Morpheus, the bleeding tree, the cloud that envelops the fallen warrior and allows him to escape, the journey in Hades, the story of Hippolytus, and fauns, satyrs and other minor mythological beings. You find, also, out of medieval things, the method of the poem which is the characteristic medieval method of allegory, and in imagery dragons, giants, dwarfs, the hermit, the magician, the dungeon, the wood of error, the dream of Arthur, the holy wells, the Saracen Knights, the House of Pride, the House of Holiness, and many more; and, in these lists, I have cited instances only from the first of the six books. A similar rich variety of matter is to be found, consisting of the characteristic belongings of Renaissance fable. This multiplicity of imaginative detail, being as it is a summary of all the poetical knowledge of previous time, is perplexing to a reader unfamiliar with the literature before Spenser, and makes the poem seem really, and not merely artistically remote. Here appears most clearly the fact which I emphasize, that the "Faerie Queene" depicts and contains a receding world, a dying culture; for

it is to be borne in mind that to Spenser and his early readers these things were not then so remote; medievalism was as near to him as Puritanism is to us, and the thoughts, methods, aims, language and imagery of the Renaissance as near as the Revolution is to us. In that age, too, chivalry yet lingered, at least as a spectacle, and other materials in the poem that now seem to us like stage-machinery were part and parcel of real life. The tourney was still a game of splendid pleasure and display at the Court of Elizabeth; the masque-procession, so constant in one or another form in the poem, was a fashion of Christmas mummery, of the Court Masque, and of city processions; the physical aspect and furniture of the poem were, thus, not wholly antiquated; and on the side of character, it is easy to read between the lines the presence of Spenser's own noble friends — and no one in that age was richer in noble friendship — the presence, I mean, of the just Lord Grey, the adventurous Raleigh, and the high-spirited Philip Sidney. The element of historical remoteness must, therefore, be thought of as originally much less strong than now, and one which the passage of time has imported into the poem very largely.

We are, perhaps, too apt to think that our own age is one in which great heterogenousness of knowledge, of thought and principle and faith, is a distinctive trait; but we are not the first to find our race-inheritance a confusion of riches, and a tentative eclecticism the best we can compass in getting a philosophy of our own. Every learned and open mind, in the times of the flowing together of the world's ideas, has the same experience. Spenser, being a receptive mind and standing at the center of the ideas of the world then, was necessarily

overwhelmed with the variety of his knowledge; but he faced the same problem that Milton, Gray, Shelley, and Tennyson in their time met; the problem of how to reduce this miscellaneousness of matter to some order, to reconcile it with his own mind, to build up out of it his own world. It is the same problem that confronts each one of us, in education; in the presence of this race-inheritance, so vast, so apparently contradictory and diverse — how to take possession of it, to make it ours vitally, to have it enter into and take possession of us. Spenser is an admirable example of this situation, for in his poem the opposition between the race-mind and the individual is clearly brought out in the point that he converges all this imagery, knowledge and method in order to set forth the individual's life. Spenser states his purpose in the preface: "The general end," he says, "of all the Book is to fashion a gentleman, or noble person, in vertuous and gentle discipline." It is the very problem before each of us in education: "to fashion a gentleman." Spenser's plan, in portraying how this is to be done, is a very simple one. By a gentleman he means a man of Christian virtue, perfected in all the graces and the powers of human nature. The education required is an education in the development of the virtues, as he named them — Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, Courtesy; he illustrates the development of each virtue, one in each Knight, and sends each Knight forth on an adventure in the course of which the Knight meets and overcomes the characteristic temptations of the virtue which he embodies. This was the plan of the poem, which, however, the poet found it easier to formulate than to follow with precision. The main fact stands out, however, that Spenser used

all his resources of knowledge and art, miscellaneous as they were, for the single purpose of showing how the soul comes to moral perfection in the Christian world. You see there is nothing contemporary or remote or by-gone in the problem: that is universal and unchanging; but in answering it Spenser used an imaginative language that to many of us is like a lost tongue. Shall we, then, let the allegory go, as Lowell advised, content that it does not bite us, as he says? I cannot bring myself to second that advice. Though I am as fond of the idols of poetry for their own sake as any one, yet I have room for idols of morality and philosophy also — let us have as many idols as we can get, is my way: and to leave out of our serious-minded Spenser what was to the poet himself the core of his meaning — its spirituality — is too violent a measure, and bespeaks such desperate dullness in the allegory as I do not find in it. To read the poem for the beauty of its surface, and to let the noble substance go, is, at all events, not the way to understand it as a focus of race-elements and a store of race-power, as a poem not of momentary delight, but of historical phases of knowledge, culture and aspiration, a poem of the thoughtful human spirit brooding over its long inheritance of beauty, honor, and virtue.

Of course, I cannot in an hour convey much of an idea of so great a poem, so various in its loveliness, so profound in significance, so diversified in merely literary interest. I shall make no attempt to tell its picturesque and wandering story, to describe its characters, or to explain what marvelous lives they led in that old world of romance. But I shall try to show, in general terms, certain aspects of it as a poem that presents life in a universal, vital, and never-to-be-antiquated way, such as it

seemed to one of the most noble-natured of Englishmen, in a great age of human effort, thought and accomplishment.

Among the primary images under which life has been figured, none is more universal and constant than that into which the idea of travel enters. To all men at all times life has been a voyage, a pilgrimage, a quest. Spenser conceived of it as the quest, the peculiar image of chivalry, but not as the quest for the Grail or any other shadowy symbol on the attainment of which the quest was ended in a mystic solution. The quest of his Knights is for self-mastery; and it is achieved at each forward step of the journey. You remember that in the lecture on Prometheus I illustrated the way in which man takes a certain part of his nature — the evil principle — and places it outside of himself, calls it Mephistopheles, and so deals with it artistically; in Spenser, the temptation which each Knight is under is his worser self, as we say, so taken and placed outside as his enemy whom he overcomes; thus, Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, overcomes the various forms of anger, of avarice, and of voluptuousness, which are merely, in fact, his other and worser selves; in each victory he gathers strength for the next encounter, and so ends perfecting himself in that virtue. Life — that is to say, the quest — has a goal in self-mastery, that is progressively reached by the Knight at each new stage of his struggle. The atmosphere of life — so conceived as a spiritual warfare — is broadly rendered; it is, for example, always a thing of danger, and this element is given through the changing incident, the deceits practised on the Knights, the troubles they fall into, often unwittingly, and undeservedly, their constant need to be

vigilant and to receive succor. The secret, the false, the insidious, are as often present as is the warfare of the open foe. Again, this life is a thing of mystery. However clear we may try to make life, however positive in mind we are and armed against illusions, it still remains true that mystery envelops life. I do not mean the mystery of thought, of the unknown, but the mystery of life itself. Spenser conceives this mystery as the action, friendly or inimical, of a spiritual world round about man, a supernatural world; and he renders it by means of enchantment. I dare say that to most readers the presence of enchantment, both evil and good, is a hindrance to the appreciation of the poem and impairs its reality to their minds. Arthur, you know, has a veiled shield; but its bared radiance will overthrow of itself any foe. This seems like an unfair advantage, and takes interest from the poem. Such enchanted weapons may be regarded as symbolic of the higher nature of the cause in which they are employed, of its inward power, and possibly of the true powers of the heroes, their spiritual force, and it may be that this emphasis on the spirituality of their force is the true reason for the introduction of the symbol; for these are not only Knights human, but Knights Christian and clothed with a might which is not of this world. Such an explanation, though plausible, seems mechanical; the truth which it contains is that the enchanted arms do not denote a higher degree of physical strength, as if the Knights had rifles instead of spears, but a difference of spiritual power. It is, however, much more clear that by the realm of enchantment in the poem is figured the interest which the supernatural world takes in man's conflict — the medieval idea that God and his angels are on one side and the devil and

his angels are on the other; and the presence of enchantment in the poem is a means of expressing this belief. The reality of divine aid against devilish machination is thus symbolized; but in one particular this aid is so important a matter that Spenser introduces it in a more essential and, in fact, in a human way. To Spenser's mind, no man could save himself, or perfect himself in virtue even, without Divine Grace; this was the doctrine he held, and, therefore, he made Arthur the special representative and instrument of Grace, and at each point of the story where the Knight cannot retrieve himself from the danger into which he had fallen, Arthur appears with his glorious arms for the rescue. The presence of mystery in life, too, is not only thus felt in the atmosphere of enchantment and in the signal acts of rescue by Arthur, but it also envelops the cardinal abstract ideas of the poem — such ideas, I mean, as wisdom in Una, and as chastity in Britomart, to whose beauty (which is, of course, the imaging forth of the special virtue of each) is ascribed a miraculous power of mastery, as in Una's case over the Lion and the foresters, and in Britomart's case over Artegal.

> "And he himselfe long gazing there upon,
> At last fell humbly downe upon his knee,
> And of his wonder made religion,
> Weening some heavenly goddesse he did see."

This is that radiance which Plato first saw in the countenance of Truth, such that, he said, were Truth to come among men unveiled in her own form, all men would worship her. So Spenser, learning from Plato, presents the essential loveliness of all virtue as having inherent power to overcome — precisely, you will remember, as

Keats describes the principle of beauty in "Hyperion" as inherently victorious.

The idea of life as a quest, with an atmosphere of danger and mystery, and presided over by great principles such as wisdom, grace, chastity, so clad in loveliness to the moral sense that they seem like secondary forms of Divine being — these are fundamental conceptions in the poem, its roots, so to speak, and they belong in the ethical sphere. But Spenser was the most poetically minded of all English poets; he not only knew that however true and exalted his ideas of life might be, they must come forth from his mind as images, but he also by nature loved truth in the image more than in the abstract; and he therefore approached truth through the imagination rather than through the intellect. That is to say, he was a poet, first and foremost; and wove his poem of sensuous effects. Sensibility to all things of sense was his primary endowment; he was a lover of beauty, of joy, and his joy in beauty reached such a pitch that he excels all English poets in a certain artistic voluptuousness of nature, which was less rich in Milton and less pure in Keats, who alone are to be compared with him, as poets of sensuous endowment. It is seldom that the artistic nature appears in the English race; it belongs rather to the southern peoples, and especially to Italy; but when it does arise in the English genius, and blends happily there with the high moral spirit which is a more constant English trait — especially when it blends with the Puritan strain, it seems as if the young Plato had been born again. Both Milton and Spenser were Puritans who were lovers of beauty; and Spenser showed Milton that way of grace. No language can exaggerate the extent to which Spenser was permeated

with this sensuousness of temperament, and he created the body of his poem out of it — the color, the picture, the incident, figures and places, the atmosphere, the cadence and the melody of it. You feel this bodily delight in the very fall of the lines, interlacing and sinuous, with Italian softness, smoothness, and slide. You feel it in his love of gardens and streams; in his love of pictured walls, and all the characteristic adornments of Renaissance art; in his grouping of human figures in the various forms of the masque; in his descriptions of wealth and luxury, of the bower of bliss, of the scenes of mythology; in every part of the poem the flowing of this fount of beauty is the one unfailing thing. It came to him from the Italian Renaissance, of course. It is the Renaissance element in the poem; and with it all the other elements are suffused.

The worship of beauty, as it was known in all objects of art, and in all poetry which had formed itself, in description and motive, on objects of art, was perhaps its center; but, in Spenser, it exceeded such bounds, and, though taken from the Renaissance, it was given a new career in Puritanism. For the singular thing about this sensuous sensibility in Spenser, this artistic voluptuousness in the sight and presence of beauty, is that it remained pure in spirit. In Renaissance poetry, using the same chivalric tradition as Spenser, this spirit has ended in Ariosto's "Orlando" — a poem of cynicism, as it seems to me. It is to the honor of the moral genius of the English that the Renaissance spirit in poetry, in their tongue, issued in so nobly different a poem as "The Faerie Queene." This was because, as I say, the Renaissance worship of beauty was given a new career by Spenser in Puritanism. Perhaps I can best illustrate the matter

by bringing forward what was one of Spenser's noblest points. He raised this worship of beauty to the highest point of ideality by having recourse to the tradition of chivalry in its worship of woman, and blended the two in a new worship of womanhood. I think it will be agreed that, although Spenser's romance is primarily one of the adventures of men, it is his female characters that live most vividly in the memory of the reader. These characters are, indeed, very simple and elementary ones; they are not elaborated on the scale to which the novel has accustomed our minds; but they are of the same kind, it seems to me, as Shakespeare's equally simple types of womanhood — such as Cordelia, Imogen, Miranda — of which they were prophetic. What I desire to bring out, however, is not their simplicity, but the fact that they enter the poem to ennoble it, to raise it in spiritual power, and to strengthen the heroes in their struggles. In this respect, as I think, Spenser did a new thing. In the epic, generally, woman comes on the scene only to impair the moral quality and the manly actions of the hero: such was Dido, you remember, in the "Æneid," and Eve in "Paradise Lost," and the same story, with slight qualifications holds of other epic poems. It is a high distinction that in Spenser womanhood is presented, not as the source of evil, its presence and its temptation, but as the inspiration of life for such Knights as Artegal, the Red-Cross Knight, and others; and, furthermore, the worship of beauty, which they found in the worship of womanhood, is in Spenser hardly to be distinguished from the worship of those principles, which I have described as secondary forms of Divine being — the principles of wisdom, chastity and the like. I find in these idealities of womanhood the highest reach

of the poem, and in them blend harmoniously the chivalric, artistic and moral elements of Spenser's mind. And as we feel in Spenser's men the near presence of such friends as Lord Grey, Raleigh and Sidney, it is not fanciful to feel here the neighborhood of Elizabethan women — such as she of whom Jonson wrote the great epitaph:

> "Underneath this sable hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse;
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
> Death, ere thou hast slain another
> Learned and fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee."

With this supreme presence of womanhood in "The Faerie Queene" goes the fact that warfare as such is a disappearing element; it is less prominent, and it interests less, than might be expected. This is because, just as beauty in all its forms is spiritualized in the poem, so is war; the war here described is the inner warfare of the soul with itself; it is all a symbol of spiritual struggle, and necessarily it seems less real as a thing of outward event. The poem is one of thought, essentially; its action has to be interpreted in terms of thought before it is understood; it is, in truth, a contemplative poem, and its mood is as often the artistic contemplation of beauty, as the ethical contemplation of action. These are the two poles on which the poem moves. Yet they are opposed only in the analysis, and to our eyes; in Spenser's poem, and in his heart they were closely united, for virtue was to him the utmost of beauty, and its attainment was by the worship of beauty; so near, by certain aptitudes of emotion towards the supreme good, did he

come to Plato, his teacher, and is therefore to be fitly described, in this regard, as the disciple of Plato.

I wonder whether, as I have been speaking, the poem and its author grow more or less remote to you. Spenser — this philosophical Platonist, this Renaissance artist, this Puritan moralist — does he seem more or less credible? Was it not a strange thing that he should think that the abstract development of a Christian soul, however picturesquely presented, was an important theme of poetry? Yet it is true, that the most purely poetical of English poets, and one of the most cultivated minds of Europe in his time, had this idea; and in Elizabeth's reign — that is, in a period of worldly and masculine activity, of immense vigor, in the very dawn and sunburst of an England to which our American imperial dream is but a toy of fancy — in that Elizabethan, that Shakespearian age, Spenser chose as the theme of highest moment the formation of a Christian character. I have spoken of the artistic remoteness of his poem, and of the remoteness of his literary tradition, its classical, medieval and Renaissance matter and method; but there is a third remoteness by which it seems yet more distant — the remoteness of its spirituality. In the days about and before Spenser there was great interest in the question of character in the upper classes; what were the qualities of a courtier was debated over and over in every civilized country, and the books written about it are still famous books and worth reading. Spenser took this Renaissance idea — what is the pattern of manhood? — and — just as in the case of the worship of beauty — gave it a career in Puritanism. The question became — what is a Christian soul, perfected in human experience? What are its aims, its means, its natural history? What

is its ideal life in this world of beauty, honor, service? And this question he debated in the six books of his half-completed poem, which has made him known ever since as the poet's poet. The Knight of the "Faerie Queene" is the Renaissance courtier Christianized — that is all. Here is the final spiritualization of the long result of chivalry as an ideal of manly life. That is the curious thing — that the result is, not merely moral, but spiritual.

The spiritual life, in this sense, is far removed from our literature; it is so, because it is far removed from the general thought of men. The struggle men now think of as universal and typical of life, is not the clashing of spear and shield on any field of tourney, nor the fencing of the soul with any supernatural foe, seeking its damnation: it is the mere struggle for existence, with the survival of the fittest as the result, a scientific idea, and one that centers attention on the things of this world. This increases the sense in mankind of the materialism of human life and the importance of its mortal interests. Commerce seconds science in defining this struggle as a competition of trade, a conflict, on the larger scale, of tariff wars, a race for special privilege and open opportunity in new countries. Science and trade are almost as large a part of life now as righteousness was in Matthew Arnold's day: he reckoned it, I believe, at three-quarters. The result is that mankind is surrounded with a different scheme of thought, meditation and effort from that of Spenser's age. He was near the ages that we call the ages of faith: he was not far from the old Catholic idea of discipline; he was not enfranchised from supernaturalism in Reformation dogmas; he lived when men still died for their religion; — all of which is to say that the idea of the spiritual in man's life and its im-

portance, was nigh and close to him. In our literature there is much presentation of moral character, in the sense of the side that a man turns toward his fellow beings in society: in Scott, Thackeray and in Dickens, George Eliot — to name the greatest, this is found; but such spiritual character as Spenser made the subject of his meditation and picturing is not found. In the history of literature, the hero of action has always ended by developing into the saintly ideal: so it was in Paganism from Achilles to Æneas; so it was in medievalism from Roland and Lancelot to Arthur, Galahad and Parsifal; and in this chivalric tradition Spenser is the last term. Will our moral ideal, as it is now flourishing, show a similar course — has our literature of the democratic movement, now in its early stages, the making of such a saint in it — that is, of the man to whom God only is real — as Paganism and medievalism in their day evolved?

Spenser, then, being so remote from us, in all ways — the question is natural, why read his poem at all? Because it is the flower of long ages: because you command in it as in a panorama the poetical tradition of all the great imaginative literature in previous centuries, classical, medieval and Renaissance; because you see how Spenser, by his appropriation of these elements became himself the Platonist, the artist, the moralist, and fused all in the passion for beauty on earth and in the heavens above, and so centered his whole nature toward God; and what took place in him may take place, according to its measure, in us. For, though the thoughts of men change from century to century, and one guiding principle yields to another, and the ideal life is built up in new ways in successive generations, yet the soul's life

remains, however cast in new forms of the old passion for beauty and virtue. If Spenser be a poet's poet, as they say, let him appeal to the poet in you — for in every man there is a poet; let him appeal in his own way, as a teacher of the spiritual life; and, if my wish might prevail, let him come most home to you and receive intimate welcome as the Puritan lover of beauty.

VI

MILTON

Milton is a great figure in our minds. He is a very lonely figure. For one thing, he has no companions of genius round him; there is no group about him, in his age. Again, he was a blind old man, and there is something in blindness that, more than anything else, isolates a man; and in his case, by strange but powerful contrast, his blindness is enlarged and glorified by the fact that he saw all the glory of the angels and the Godhead as no other mortal eye ever beheld them, and the fact that he was blind makes the vision itself more credible. And thirdly he has impressed himself on men's memories as unique in character; and, in his age defeated and given o'er, among his enemies exposed and left, with the Puritan cause lost, he is the very type and pattern of a great spirit in defeat — imprisoned in his blindness, poor, neglected, yet still faithful and the master of his own integrity; for us, almost as much as a poet, he remains the intellectual champion of human liberty. So through centuries there has slowly formed itself this lonely figure in our minds as our thought of Milton, and as Caesar is a universal name of imperial power, the name of Milton has become a synonym of moral majesty. But it was not thus that he was thought of in his own times. There is no evidence that Cromwell or the other important men of the state knew that Milton was greater than they, or that

he was truly great at all; to them he was pre-eminently a secretary in the state department. The next generation of poets — Dryden — called him "the old schoolmaster," you remember. In his earlier years he appealed to the taste of a few cultivated and traveled gentlemen, like Sir Henry Wotton, as a graceful and noble-languaged poet; but it was a full generation after his death that he was accepted into the roll of the great, by Addison in the "Spectator," and the next century was well on its way before he was imitated by new men as the English model of blank verse. In the literary tradition of England, however, he is now established, and for all of us he stands apart, a majestic memory, as I have said, touched with the sublimity of his subject and with the sublimity of his own character. There is, too, in our thoughts of him, something grim, something of the sterner aspect of historical Puritanism; the softness of Spenser, the softness of his youth, had gone out of him, and he had all the hardness of man in him — he was trained down to the last ounce — he was austere. Yet I love to recall his youth — you remember the fair boy-face of the first portrait — a face of singular beauty; and you know his pink and white complexion was such at the University that he was called "the Lady of Christ's"; and, in those first years of his poetizing, he was deep in the loveliest verse of Greece and Italy, in Pindar and Euripides, in Petrarch and Tasso, as well as in Shakespeare and Spenser who were his English masters. He was a young humanist — filled to overflowing with the new learning and its artistic products, a lover of them and of music, and of everything beautiful in nature — he was especially a landscape-lover. Even then the clear spirit — the white soul — somewhat too unspotted for human

affections to cling about, it may be — was there; you hear it singing in the high and piercing melody of the "Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," which happily is usually a child's first knowledge of him; a certain aloofness of nature he has, and nowhere do you find in his English verse — nor do I find it in his Latin verse where it is sometimes thought to be — nowhere do you find the note of friendship, of that companionableness which is often so charming a trait in the young lives of the poets. But within his own reserves — and perhaps the more precious and refined for that very reason — there was the same sensuous delight in the artistic things of sense, in natural beauty, in romantic charm, in the lines of the old poets, that there was in Spenser; and in this he was, as we mark literary descent, the child of Spenser, though of course his culture was fed from other sources and in larger measure, too. For he was a better scholar than Spenser — his times allowed him to be — and he had a far more powerful intellect. But, in these years of his milder and happier youth, when he was living in the country in his long studies — he was a student at ease till thirty — and when he was traveling in Italy, he was in the true path of Spenser and the Renaissance, the path of beauty, with faith in its divine leading. How permanent the doctrine of the divine leading of beauty was in Milton's mind will appear later; but here its early presence is to be observed, because it gives to Milton the true quality and atmosphere of his lost youth, and also marks the great difference in tone and temper between the earlier poems — so golden phrased, so mellifluous, so happy — and the poems of his age, the "Paradise Lost" and "Regained" and the "Samson." In "Comus," more particularly in "L'Allegro" and "Il

Penseroso," is the young Milton — he that the fair-haired boy grew into, the humanist student, the writer of Italian sonnets, the "landscape-lover, lord of language" — before Cromwell's age laid its heavy and manhood-enforcing hand on the poet who chose first to serve his country.

But it is the poet of whom I am to speak; and, perhaps, before entering on the subject of his verse, it may be well first to endeavor to mark his place more precisely in English poetry and to account, partially at least, for its historical distinction. A poet, so great as Milton, you may be sure, occupies some point of vantage in history; he embodies some climax in the intellectual or artistic affairs of the world; and in Milton's case there are, I think, two historical considerations not commonly brought forward. I have had a good deal to say about allegory. It was the characteristic literary form of the Middle Ages; and the substitution of the direct story of human life in its place is one of the traits of modern times. You remember that the English drama, beginning from miracle plays and moralities and passing through the stage of historical plays, came finally in Shakespeare to a representation of human life as it is in the most direct manner. Those of you who have seen the play of "Everyman" have a very vivid idea of what allegory is in a drama, and how such a drama differs from "Romeo and Juliet." In "Everyman" abstract principles are personified, and their play in life illustrated; in "Romeo and Juliet," the passions and virtues are in the form of character, are humanized as we say, are there not as abstract principles but as human forces. The development of English drama from an allegorical mode of presenting life and character to a human realiza-

tion of them in men and women culminated in Shakespeare, who thus stood at a historic moment of climax in the evolution of his art. Now, you easily recognize the likeness of such an allegorical play as "Everyman" to Spenser's "Faerie Queene," in its method of personifying the virtues and the temptations. Religious narrative poetry remained allegorical, and medieval in artistic method, not only in Spenser, but in his successors, such as the Fletchers. Milton was the first English poet to humanize completely the characters and events of religious story, to put the religious scheme and view of the world into the form of human things, and to expel from the work the abstract allegorical element wholly. Thus he is related to previous narrative religious poetry in England precisely as Shakespeare is to the moralities of early drama. He stands at this point of climax in the evolution of his particular branch of poetic art. Religious poetry was sixty years later than dramatic poetry in reaching this perfect humanization of its material; and thus it happens that Milton, though so much younger than the Elizabethans, is commonly thought of as belonging to their company and in fact the last late product of the age of their genius.

Secondly, we are accustomed to think of the Renaissance as on the whole an affair of the southern nations, and especially of Italy; but it was a European movement, a wave of thought and peculiar passion that slowly crept up the North, and it reached its furthest point in England, and there, as I think, it reached its highest literary development. Shakespeare was the climax of the Renaissance; its passion for individuality, for a free career for the human soul, and its instinct of the dignity of personal life, were the very forces to unlock most

potently dramatic power; and in Shakespeare this was accomplished, and you know how besides he used its material and lived in its atmosphere. Spenser, also, as I said in the last lecture, took the worship of beauty and the idea of the courtier from the Renaissance, spiritualized the one and Christianized the other, and gave them a new career in English Puritanism. Milton is to be associated with Shakespeare and Spenser, as a third and the last great representative of the Renaissance in England, and as there carrying its epic power to a degree of perfection far beyond what it had reached in Italy, exceeding both Ariosto and Tasso; in him were the learning and taste of the Renaissance, its cultivation of individuality and respect for it — in both matter and spirit he belonged fundamentally to that movement, and was its latest climax. I therefore define his historical position as being the point at which religious poetry was completely humanized in England, and at which the Renaissance spirit generally as a European movement culminated in epic poetry.

"Paradise Lost" is the poem by which Milton lives. Fond as we may be of his younger verse, and appreciative of the eloquence of "Paradise Regained" and of the tragic simplicity of "Samson Agonistes," yet popular judgment is to be followed in finding in "Paradise Lost" the true center of Milton's genius. Every poet who achieves a single great poem puts his whole mind into it, empties his mind and tells all he knows; his felicity is to find a subject which permits him to do this; such was the course of Homer and Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Goethe, to name a few, and Milton was no exception to the rule. He included in his poem the entire history of the universe from the heaven which was before creation to the millen-

nium which shall be the consummation of all things; and, in this great sphere of action he chose as the objective point the moral relation of mankind to God, certainly the highest subject in importance; and in elaborating his work he used all the wealth of his literary knowledge and culture, the entire literary tradition of the race, just as Spenser did — only more broadly; whatever, either in matter or method, there was serviceable in past literature — Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, and English — all this Milton used. He grasped and constructed the subject with great mental power and artistic skill; although, in minor parts, his conventional machinery and devices have been attacked, the leading lines of his construction stand clear of criticism. He really took three great themes, any one of which would have furnished forth a poem, and blended them together with such dexterity that they are seldom separated even in analysis — so perfect is the unity of the resulting whole. In the first place, you recognize at once in "Paradise Lost" a Christian adaptation of the Titan Myth. The rebellion of the angels is conceived as a war of the Titans against the gods; and is treated in accordance with Greek imagination as a conflict in which the mountains were used as weapons: —

> "From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
> They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,
> Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
> Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
> Be sure, and terror, seized the rebel host
> When coming towards them so dread they saw
> The bottom of the mountains upward turned . . .
> Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
> Main promontories flung, which in the air
> Came shadowing . . .

So hills amid the air encountered hills,
. . . horrid confusion heaped
Upon confusion rose."

Satan on the flood of hell is conceived as of Titanic form:

"With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a road, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon" —

and you recall how he reared himself from off the fiery lake, and took his station on the shore, with the ponderous shield whose "broad circumference hung on his shoulders like the moon," and stayed his steps with his tall spear —

"To equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand;"

and there summoning his squadrons loomed over them like the sun "in dim eclipse, disastrous twilight shedding on half the nations." Such is Satan's figure at the first, and it is by such images of Titanic darkened grandeur that his form is most vividly remembered. I have spoken of the difficulty the poets have had in defining the forms of the Titans to the eye. Milton solves the problem by ascribing to the devil and his angels no determinate form; they are, so to speak, collapsible and extensible at will; and they take the appropriate scales of proportion in whatever scene they are placed.

It is common to think of Satan as the true hero of the

poem, and as an imaginative figure he certainly occupies the foreground; yet to Milton he was a hateful being, and I am convinced that familiarity with the poem takes from him that admiration which properly should belong to the hero, and at the end he is clearly felt as the object of repulsive evil, whom Milton meant him to be. Milton's method, after presenting Satan in somber but majestic form, is gradually to debase him to the eye as well as to the mind. Here the treatment sets him apart from any conception of the Titan Prometheus in bonds; for Prometheus is never felt to be debased even physically by the punishment of Zeus. The first revolt of the reader's mind from its initial admiration for Satan takes place, I think, acutely in the scene at the gate of hell when he meets Sin and Death. The association of Satan with such horrible beings as they are represented to be, and the knowledge that his intimacy with them is that of fatherhood, shocks the mind with ugliness — ugliness that is almost bestial in its effect. When he reaches the new earth, after his address to the Sun, he is seen transformed in countenance —

> "Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face
> Thrice changed with pale — ire, envy and despair,
> Which marred his borrowed visage — "

and soon he is "squat like a toad" at the ear of Eve; whence touched by the young angel's spear, he rises "the grisly King," so changed from his heavenly self that he is unrecognized. Then, after one more grand Titanic figuring of his might — the most impressive of all — as he opposes Gabriel: —

> "On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
> Collecting all his might, dilated stood,

Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved:
His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
Sat Horror plumed; —"

after this unforgetable and heroic figure, Milton dismisses him from the poem in the scene in hell, where, returning after his triumph to take the applause of his host, he is, in the moment of his highest boasting, transformed into the serpent with all his followers in like forms — a scene so repellent that perhaps none has been more adversely commented on. This gradual degradation of Satan, in his form, is, it seems to me, a cardinal point in the poem. It is to be associated with Milton's idea of beauty — that Platonic idea which I mentioned. The first observation of Satan in hell is the lost brightness of Beelzebub whom he addresses:

"If thou beest he — but oh, how fallen! how changed
From him, who, in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! — "

When he comes to the new creation, the radiance of the sun reminds him of the same change in himself, and when the young angel surprises him in Eden, it is his lost beauty that he mourns.

"So spake the cherub: and his grave rebuke,
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely — saw, and pined
His loss; but chiefly to find here observed
His luster visibly impaired."

The power of beauty over him is the last vestige of his lost nobility. Thus in Eden gazing on Adam and Eve, he says, —

"Whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love: so lively shines
In them divine resemblance;"

and just before the temptation, in the presence of Eve, he felt her beauty to be such that —

"That space the evil One abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge."

It is only by a recovery of his evil nature that he gains power to go on with his deceit. Such relics of faded glory as his brow wore, such relics of the sense of beauty also remained in his spirit. The debasement of his form, culminating in the scorpion scene in hell, is — for Milton — one and the same thing with the corruption of his moral nature, and is in fact a principal means of characterization; for in each new act Satan takes a new form. There is nothing elsewhere in literature quite like this.

It is, however, the peculiar meanness of his revenge which most degrades Satan's character; in his rebellion against God, in his unavailing courage, when powers felt and depicted as great are matched against omnipotence, in the mere ruin of such tremendous power, there are sublime elements; but in his triumph over mankind there is no true joining of forces for equal encounter — in fact Satan is never brought in contact with Adam directly — and though Paradise is surrounded with guards and watched over by Uriel in the sun, these are no real defences; mankind is felt to be unsheltered, the power of Adam and Eve to remain obedient is not so presented as to seem a match for the power of the devil, and Satan consequently appears to triumph over a weak and inno-

cent foe, harmless to him, whom he sacrifices in a malignant spirit of revenge by ignoble and secret ways. In his own character, and apart from man, Satan embodies the Renaissance ideal of the freedom of the individual, of the affirmation of one's own life, of development of one's powers and qualities and opportunities — he is like a brilliant, unscrupulous, rebellious Italian prince having his own way with the world he is born into; to conceive of him as resembling an English rebel against the Crown, or at all indebted to that character, except perhaps in the point of resolute defiance, is, I think, to misconceive him altogether, although it is a common view. He was, on the contrary, the Renaissance prince seeking his free career, valuing individual talent and force above everything, the concentration of personal faculty, pride, ambition — and conscienceless in his determination to live all his life out. In his struggle with omnipotence, he secures respect for certain qualities of strength which in alliance with virtue are great qualities, and even in wickedness do not lose their impressiveness; but in his easy triumph over Eve in the Garden, and in its consequence to mankind, he becomes contemptible in his aim, his method, and his being.

Certain important differences in the Titan Myth as treated by Milton should be noticed. You observe that the Greek situation is reversed: the angels are the younger race of beings, and according to Greek ideas should have succeeded and thereby have asserted the principle of progress. The angels, however, were defeated. Of course, there is no room in the scheme of the universe, as Milton conceived it, for any progress — the being and the reign of God are already perfect, and progress is only the salvation of man, that is, a restora-

tion of things. Restoration, not Revolution, is Milton's cardinal idea. It follows from this that hell is necessarily the end of the angels; it is a *cul-de-sac,* a blind alley — it leads nowhere — it has no future; the poem stops in that direction as if it had run against a wall. The denial of progress has brought everything to a standstill, with eternal damnation for the angels and ultimate restoration for mankind. It is here, I think, that modern sympathy parts company with this portion of the poem — that is, with the conception of hell in it. Our thoughts are so pledged to the idea of progress, to the thought of evolution as the law of all created beings, that the notion of hell as a kind of sink and prison of the universe finds no place for itself in our minds. The only thing in civilization that resembles hell is the modern jail, and that we desire most potently to eliminate, in the sense that it shall not be a place that leads nowhere, even for the most hardened. I desire, however, only to set sharply over against each other in your minds the Hebrew fixity of Milton's thought and the Greek idea of progress, as they are brought out by the mythic wars of heaven in each case; and to suggest that the failure of the poem to interest the modern mind in hell, except as a spectacle, is connected with the fundamental denial of progress in it, and its departure from the thought of development.

The second great theme which Milton incorporated into his poem is the Bower of Bliss. This is the theme by means of which love, which next to war is the great subject of poetry, enters into the epic; the hero is withdrawn from battle, and tempted to forget his career in the world, by love for a woman. The importance of the theme, and its relative proportion of interest in the epic as a whole, steadily increased — it was a convenient way

of withdrawing the leading character and giving the other heroes an opportunity for display free from his rivalry, it was interesting in itself as opening up the whole field of the romance and tragedy of love, and it was the best kind of an episode to vary the story. Thus the loves of Æneas for Dido, in the "Æneid," and of Armida for Rinaldo in "Tasso," were represented. For Milton Eden is a Bower of Bliss, in this sense. It freed his hand for description of nature in her softest scenes and in the atmosphere of love. You may recall Tennyson's summary of it, in his lines on Milton —

> "Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
> The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
> And bloom profuse, and cedar arches
> Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean
> Where some refulgent sunset of India,
> Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean-isle,
> And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
> Whisper in odorous heights of even."

Here Milton had the characteristic scenery of the Bower of Bliss, and he elaborated it with Renaissance richness of luxurious natural detail. The situation was also characteristic, and the power of woman to weaken the moral force of the hero through love was illustrated: the issue only was different, for whereas in the normal epic the hero breaks his bonds and goes back to his career — to the founding of Rome or the capture of Jerusalem — Adam was made the tragic victim of his fall, and with him all mankind. Adam, from every point of view, holds an unenviable position, for a hero: he never, as I have said, is brought to a direct encounter with Satan, his great enemy, and in this round-about conflict in which he falls through the temptation of Eve his defeat is irrep-

arable. It is singular to observe that in the only other English poem of epical action — in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," Arthur is similarly a hero of defeat; the breaking of the Round Table is the catastrophe, brought about by the sin of Guinevere in the orthodox conventional way, and Arthur, when he sails away "to heal him of his grievous wound" leaves a lost cause behind him in the world. It would be a curious enquiry — could one answer it — why the two great epic poems of the English represent the cause of the higher life as suffering a temporary overthrow in this world. Not to enter upon that, however, I have only time to point out that, as it seems to me, modern sympathy also parts company with Milton in this portion of the poem, inasmuch as it has grown unnatural for us to regard womanhood as the peculiar means by which moral character is impaired, and the world lost; rather we go with Spenser in his conviction that womanhood is the inspiration of noble life. The character of Eve as Milton drew it is from a very ancient world of myth and race-thought: the influence of chivalry on the worldly side, and on the spiritual side the influence of the beatification of motherhood in the Virgin Mary, have profoundly affected and changed the ancient thought, and though not unfelt in Milton they have not sufficient power in him to modify essentially the primitive conception of Eve. It is the more unfortunate that Milton's own temper, as a husband, was such that he has vigorously emphasized in his poem the inferiority of woman to man, her natural subjection to him, and in general has left to her only that loveliness and charm which most appealed to him as a poet.

The third great theme of Milton is a cosmogony — that is, a story of creation: it is told by Raphael to Adam,

and it is supplemented by the history of mankind which is shown to Adam prophetically by Michael. It has been the fashion of science to ridicule, as Huxley did, Milton's description of the origin of living creatures; but as a tale of creation, his story is quite the most consistent and nobly imaginative of any that poets have told, and his panorama of history is effectively unrolled, with comprehensiveness, vigor of thought and vividness of scene. In two respects, nevertheless, modern sympathy parts company with Milton here, too. He adopted as his scheme of the universe of space, you remember, the older or Ptolemaic idea, that the earth is the center, and is surrounded by the spheres, one inside another, till you reach the outermost or *primum mobile*. He knew, of course, the Copernican scheme, which we now all hold, when we think of the relation of the earth to the sun and stars. It was, I think, the classical prepossession of his mind — his desire for a world limited, closed and clear, like a Greek temple — which led him to adopt this older scheme of the universe. But the result is that the rest of the poem is apt to seem as antiquated as its celestial geography. Again, in his view of history, he necessarily made human history unroll as a consequence of the fall of Adam, and gave an importance to its Biblical events, which they can only retain in a limited way. The center and movement of history are now so differently conceived by the general modern mind that Milton's account of history has little essential interest to the reader.

Such, as it lies in my mind, is the composition of the "Paradise Lost" — a Titan Myth, a Bower of Bliss, and a Cosmogony or story of creation and history, blended into one unified poem in which the central event is the fall of Adam. It is a poem of the Renais-

sance, the last great product of that movement flowering in the far and Puritan North; it is enriched with all the treasures of the New Learning, softened with all the imaginative graces of humanism; and in the great character of Satan, it presents, on his noble side, the most magnificent embodiment of the Renaissance ideal of free and imperious individuality, and on his ignoble side it reflects some of the fairest gleams of Platonic philosophy. I have indicated in what important ways it seems disconnected with the modern mind, in its scientific and historic schemes, in its primitive view of the evil of womanhood, and in its opposition to the idea of progress. I should perhaps sum this last idea to a point, and say that in the poem the charter of free-will which the Creator gives to the angels and to Adam operates as a limitation on omnipotence; it is impossible for the modern mind to look on the Creator except as the giver of good; and yet his gift in this poem so operates as to make his omnipotence continually manifest in the act of damnation; it operates to damn the angels through their revolt, to damn Adam through his fall, and to damn mankind through Adam. Within the limits of the action described, the poem is thus from the first line to the last a poem of the damnation of things, in which the fact of final partial restoration is present as an intention and promise only. This is what makes it a poem of past time, and removes it far from the modern mind. For the democratic idea — which is the modern mind — is a power to save: it will have no prisons of vengeance, no servile nor outcast races, no closed gates of hopeless being. "Paradise Lost" is thus set behind us, as an embodiment of a historical phase of the Christian idea — like Dante.

I am aware that the verdict seems adverse to Milton;

but it is not so in reality, though I desire to make plain the fact that "Paradise Lost" is now a historical poem, a past event in the imaginative life of the race. But no words I can use would sufficiently express the admiration which this poem excites in me — not merely for its unrivalled music, nor for its style which Matthew Arnold thought keeps it alive, but for its construction as an act of intellect, for its sublime imagination in dealing with infinite space, infinite time, and eternity and the beings of eternity; for its beautiful surface in the scenes in Paradise, its idyllic sweetness and charm, the habitual eloquence and noble demeanor in the characters; nor do I find its later books less excellent, in which austere thought and nakedness of idea more appear — the characteristics of the poet coming into his own, and content with truth unadorned, simple and plain — the sign and proof, of which "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" are greater examples, that as a poet he was perfected. Small in amount, indeed, is the verse that I have read more often; such strength, such exquisiteness, such elevation, he has no rival in, for power and grace, for refinement; his voice is master of his theme; and he is seated in the heavens of poetry where Shelley saw him —

"The third among the sons of light."

VII

WORDSWORTH

We approach our own times; and if, hitherto, literature has seemed to us a somewhat far-off thing, a thing of the Greek Myth, of chivalric allegory, of the Renaissance hero, it should now grow near and fast to us as our chief present aid in leading that large race-life of the mind whose end, as I have said, is to free the individual soul. The notion that poetry is a thing remote from life is a singular delusion; it is more truly to be described as the highway of our days, though we tread it, as children tread the path of innocence, without knowing it. Nothing is more constant in the life of boy or man than the outgoing of his soul into the world about him, and this outgoing, however it be achieved, is the act of poetry. It is in the realm of nature that these journeys first take place; nature is a medium by which the soul passes out into a larger existence; and as nature is very close to all men, perhaps our experience with her offers the most universal, certainly it offers the most elementary, illustration of the poetical life which all men in some measure lead. Wordsworth is, pre-eminently, a guide in this region; and, as he was less indebted than poets usually are to the great tradition of literature in past ages, poetry in him seems more exclusively a thing of the present life, contemporary and altogether our own. Such a poet, endeavoring by a conscious reform to renew poetry

in his age and bring it home to man's bosom, eliminating the conventional ways, images, and language even of the poetic past, is necessarily thrown back on nature, in the external world, and on character, in the internal world, for his subject-matter; history, except in contemporary forms, will be far from him, and of myth and chivalry, of Plato and the Italians, though he will have his share, he will have the least possible. This may leave his verse bare and monotonous in quality, but what substance it does contain will have great vitality, for it comes directly from the man. You will observe, however, that his narrower scope of learning, treatment, and theme makes no difference in the essential point of interest. His longest and most deliberate poem — that one into which he tried to empty his entire mind, as I said is a great poet's way — "The Prelude," is the history of the formation of his mind; that is, plainly, his subject is the same as Spenser's — how in our days is a human soul brought to its fullness of power and grace? The manner, the story, the accessories, the entire color and atmosphere, are changed from what they were in the Elizabethan times, but the question abides. Spenser is hardly aware that nature has anything to do with forming the soul; to Wordsworth, nature seems its chief nourishment and fosterer, almost its creator. I desire to illustrate how Wordsworth represented the outgoing of the soul in nature, as a part of its discipline, its education in life, like the quest of the Knights in Spenser.

When you go out to walk alone in a scene of natural beauty, your senses are first excited and interested; but often there arise in consequence feelings and ideas harmonious with the scene, and emotionally touched with it, which gradually absorb your consciousness; and at

last you find yourself engaged in a mood — perhaps of memory — from which the external scene has entirely dropped away or round which it is felt only as a nimbus or halo of beauty, or mystery or calm. This happens constantly and normally to all of us, and it is an act of poetry; for it is the very method and secret of the lyric. The poet receiving some impulse through his senses delights in it, and rises by natural harmony to feelings and ideas that belong with such joy, and ends in the higher pleasure to which his senses have served him as the stairway of divine surprise. Such a poem is Burns's "Highland Mary"; he begins with the outer scene, woods and the summer, and you will notice how at the end all has dropped away except the love in his heart:

"Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took my last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;

But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary.

Oh, pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly;
And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary."

His heart has taken the place of all the world as Mary's dwelling.

This experience, this course of emotional thought, is the habit of the human heart; it is repeated countless times in any man's life. In each case the poem depends only on where we stop our minds. We may stop in the outer scene, and have only beautiful description: we may go on into the mood of imagination or memory, and end there; we may go further, and reach some contact with divine things, with God in nature. It is easy to illustrate the matter from Wordsworth, for he has himself defined these stages. You remember his account of his boyish skating on the ice:

"— All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag

Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, — or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea."

Any boy, who has skated on the river, has lived that poem: has had the physical sense of the scene, which arouses in him a certain reverberation of feeling. The second stage — that of youth — is as usual, though in Wordsworth it was uncommonly prolonged and intense:

"Though changed, no doubt from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures."

Here the physical scene is less felt — the excitement, the reverberation, is greater. There is the third stage, to which in this poem he immediately passed on:

"For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things."

Here the physical scene has become abstract and elemental — diaphanous beauty — and he is in the presence of the divine power shining through its veils. Nature, beginning with the awe of boyhood, ripening into the passion and high delight of youth, matures in manhood in the spiritual insight which makes the daily

process of life in merely living under the sky and in sight of earthly beauty an act of worship. It is plain, as I said, that the degree to which any man may live Wordsworth's poem depends only on where his mind stops in its ordinary human process, whether with the boy on the ice, the youth on the mountains or the man with "the light of setting suns." In all these cases, you will notice, Wordsworth represents the soul as going out from him into the large material sphere.

Wordsworth, however, was acutely conscious of the reaction of nature on mankind, of its formative power over men and their lives. The idea is most familiar to us as the influence of the environment; and we think of a sea-coast people, like the Greeks, as differing from a mountaineer people, like the Swiss, because of their natural surroundings. The idea, however, is more precise than that. The field which the farmer tills slowly bends his form to itself. You remember Millet's famous painting "The Angelus." The peasant who is its center has been physically formed by toiling in the fields where he stands; you feel as you look, that the landscape itself is summed up, and almost embodied in him, its creature, and the picture is spiritualized, and made a type of our common humanity, by the sound of the Angelus reflected in his prayerful attitude. That is the way that Wordsworth conceived of nature as forming his dalesmen and shepherds. There is this landscape quality in all his memorable characters; you think of them, you see them, in connection with the soil. Thus you recall the figure of the Reaper; you see her at her task in the field, and the song she sings:

> "The music in my heart I bore
> Long after it was heard no more" —

that song unifies the poem and spiritualizes it, precisely as the prayer does in "The Angelus." So you see "The Leech-Gatherers":

> "In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
> About the weary moors continually
> Wandering about alone and silently;" —

So, too, Simon Lee, the old huntsman, and Matthew at his daughter's grave, and Michael, the builder of the sheep-fold, and Ruth, and good Lord Clifford, are landscape figures.

Wordsworth carried his thought of the formative power of nature beyond this point, and to take at once the characteristic poem, he saw nature forming the soul of a woman:

> "Three years she grew in sun and shower,
> Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
> On earth was never sown;
> This child I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A Lady of my own.
>
> 'Myself will to my darling be
> Both law and impulse: and with me
> The Girl, in rock and plain,
> In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
> Shall feel an overseeing power
> To kindle or restrain.
>
> 'She shall be sportive as the Fawn
> That wild with glee across the lawn
> Or up the mountain springs;
> And hers shall be the breathing balm,
> And hers the silence and the calm
> Of mute insensate things

'The floating Clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that should mold the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The Stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In every secret place
Where Rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy Dell.' "

The poem comes to its climax in the thought that "beauty born of murmuring sound, shall pass into her face." There is nothing extravagant in the idea. You have all seen a face transfigured while listening to music, or to the sea; and the thought is that such listening being habitual, the expression becomes habitual, and not only that but the peace and joy and inner harmony, which the expression denotes, have become habitual, that is, parts of character. Wordsworth displays his thought more at length in the "Tintern Abbey" lines, in his counsel to his sister and his confessions of his own life with nature. In consequence of this general attitude of mind toward the educating power of nature, Wordsworth held his maxim, that we "can feed this mind of ours with wise passiveness."

He had a faith as perfect as that of the Concord philosophers in the alms of the idle hour. And he did not mean merely that thoughts and impressions stream in on one, who expands his petals to the flying pollen of heaven, or that moral instances like the lesson of the Celandine will store his collector's box, but that intimacy — habitual intimacy with the highest truths of the soul — is reached in this way. He had the impression that childhood was especially susceptible to these influences and revelations; and the glorification of childhood which is a marked trait of his most deeply-felt verse, lies in this neighborhood of its being to nature and nature's revelations. In his ode on the "Intimations of Immortality" in childhood he pours forth, in the most passionate and eloquent phrase, his clearest, most vivid and most penetrating intuitions of the power of nature in these ways, on the boy and the man.

Such are some of the moods in which Wordsworth conceived the operation of nature on man as molding both general and individual life, the thoughts and emotions of men and women, and the soul of childhood, as if nature were the delegated hand of God to shape our lives, and carried with its touch some power to impart heavenly wisdom. Wordsworth, you observe, had a very primitive mind; in that act of gazing on setting suns he is not far from being a sun-worshipper: he still can believe that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes." He conceives of nature, as an element, in grand lines; and he thinks of the phases of human life even — of its great occupations, its affections and sorrows, almost as if they were parts of nature — even more closely united to it and with greater kindliness than Virgil represented

them in the Georgics. This simple, primitive, elementary mind underlies his thought of childhood, too, and it appears, perhaps, most significantly in the fact that when through nature he touches on the boundaries of divine being, he achieves no more than a sense of the presence of God in nature — it is only a silent presence — he does not find, so far as I can see, at any time the voice of God there. This is the primitive mood of savage and pagan man.

Perhaps it may be well to consider for a moment the place of nature in modern life, apart from Wordsworth. Lucretius, who first took a scientific view of the world, as a poet, found in nature the inveterate hard foe of mankind: he it was who first saw the careless gods look down upon

> "An ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
> Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
> Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine, and oil,
> Till they perish."

Virgil, as I have said, felt rather the kindly coöperation of nature with man in producing the fruits of the field, and the flocks and herds of the hills, to feed and clothe us. Our view is not so much that of Lucretius, of the opposition, but rather of the indifference of nature. She knows not mercy, nor justice, nor chastity, nor any human virtue; and man in emerging from her world lives in a sphere of thought, conduct, and aspiration to which she is a stranger. Yet, that kindly coöperation that Virgil saw, still continues on the lower levels of life, and the great change is that, whereas of old and in his day the sense of dependence on nature, that is to say on the gods, was habitual and daily, now through the growth of the

world, that dependence is no longer felt as at all supernatural; the harvest ripens or fails, but we have little thought of the gods therewith; and, in fact, the habitual sense of the dependence of our own bodies on the favor of heaven is a vanishing quality. It is a consequence of this that our life necessarily grows more purely spiritual, and such dependence on the divine as is recognized is a dependence of the soul itself, felt in the contemplative mind and much more in the life of the affections. Nature as an intermediary between God and man has lost in importance, through the growth and spread of the idea of the order obtaining in nature as against the idea of nature as a series of special providences in relation to our daily lives. I count this loss as a gain, inasmuch as it throws the soul back on its own higher nature and essential life. But there is another change. Of old the thought was of the earth and toil upon it; that was nature; now our thought of nature is of a force, which we subdue. It has come about through the extraordinary development of mechanical skill. Of old we taught the winds to waft our ships, and the waters to drive our mills; but now — to take the significant example — we have enslaved the lightning. Nature has become in our thoughts a Caliban reduced to civility by being put in bonds. I have much sympathy with theoretic science; with the mind's view of the world — and I recognize its noble results, not only in philosophic thought, but in much impressionistic art. But I have all of a poet's impatience of applied science. I remember hearing a story years ago of a snail who got mounted on a tortoise: "My!" he said, "how the grass whistles by!" And when I hear people in trolley-cars talk of riding on the wings of the lightning I think of the snail. What is the speed of the lightning to

the swiftness of the "wings of meditation and the thoughts of love" that the soul of Hamlet knew? Is Niagara essentially an electric-lighting plant? I have heard men of science — the same men who told me that Homer never did anything of half the importance of a theorem in mechanics — I have heard them sneer at the old Greek idea that man was the center of the universe — the Christian idea that Milton had — the idea of George Herbert:

> "Man is one world,
> And hath another to attend him:—"

this idea was man's foolish egoism. But is it a larger idea to think of nature as man's Jack-of-all-trades? For me, I must say, science — applied science — degrades the conception of nature in narrowing it to the grooves of material use. Yet this is, in general, our modern idea — the prevailing idea — of nature. What poem of recent years has been more acclaimed than that in which a Scotch Presbyterian engineer found in his engine the idea of God? It is well that he should find the idea there, as it was well in the eighteenth century that the clock-maker should find his idea of God as a clock-maker, since that was the measure of his knowledge of God; but, for all that, the narrowing influence of these scientific conceptions is no less. Hence it is that we fall into the commonest error of men — the error of perspective, a wrong sense of the proportion of things. Our eyes are fixed on the material uses of nature, and he is great among us who sets her to some new task in cheapening steel or facilitating transportation. Now in Wordsworth there is nothing of this; he hardly notices, indeed, what to Virgil was so important, her coöperation in

agriculture and the life of the farm. Wordsworth restores to us the spiritual use of nature; and the spiritual use that man makes of the world is the really important thing. With that primitive mind of his, he realizes at once the closeness with which we are cradled in nature, the universality of her life round about us:

> "He laid us as we lay at birth
> On the cool flowery lap of earth;
> Smiles broke from us and we had ease.
> The hills were round about us, and the breeze
> Went o'er the sunlit fields again:
> Our foreheads felt the wind and rain."

For the least conscious, for the semi-vital among men, nature is the blanket of God round about them; for the most spiritually-minded, nature is the ante-room to His presence, and our way to a higher life. In poem after poem Wordsworth illustrates all modes of approach by which on the threshold of nature the soul grows conscious of itself; especially he shows how nature feeds the mind with beauty through the senses:

> "Sensations sweet
> Felt in the blood and felt along the heart
> And passing even into my purer mind;"

and thus is a chief minister to us in that building of our own world — physical, emotional, moral — each one of us for himself, which is the necessary task of all. It is not a machine that we have to make, to hew wood and draw water for us, and carry us from place to place at electrical speed; it is a world that we have to build for our souls to live in and grow through, a world of happy memory, of pure hope, of daily beauty, the world of our habitual selves, and Wordsworth shows what elements

for such a world of the soul — for such a daily self — nature provides and what is the art of its construction.

To Wordsworth, however, no more than to other poets was nature the whole of life: and even to him, if you stop to think about it, nature has no life of her own, but is only one mode of the soul's existence and self-consciousness. He came back at last, as all do, to man as the only subject that finally interests men. I said that in nature he found only the presence, but not the voice, of God. The voice of God he found in his own bosom, in conscience, in duty, as you remember in his "Ode to Duty" he begins:

> "Stern daughter of the voice of God,
> O Duty — if that name thou love — "

The second great root of his poetry is character — moral character, and in defining and enforcing its ideals none of our poets is more truly English, more truly of the race to which character is always an engrossing and primary interest. In the poem, called "The Happy Warrior" he delineated both the public and private aspects of character, as conceived by the English, with a felicity of phrase and solidity of thought, and also with eloquent distinction, such as to place the poem apart by itself as unique in our literature. The better example, however, for my purposes, is the portrait of a woman — "She was a phantom of delight," — the companion-piece to that I have already read — in which he begins from the things of sense, and goes on, in the way I have described, to the moral, and finally to the spiritual sphere. Here the lyric method of poetry is again illustrated — how, starting from the external world it becomes at last purely internal — which is the method, as you recognize,

of all poetical life in essence. Apart from abstract character, the sphere of human life which Wordsworth most attended to was of course that humble life of the poor in which he was most interested because they were near to the soil, and, as he thought, nearer on that account to nature's hand. It is, however, a transparent error to think of dalesmen and shepherds as nearer to nature in this sense; it is one of the fallacies of civilized life; for Wordsworth himself is the shining example how much more, in both intimacy and fullness, was his life with nature than that of any other in his generation. Nature is not to be thought of as a kind of agricultural-school education, a thing for children and dalesmen; but the same rule that holds of all the gift of life holds here, that the beneficence, the splendor and mystery of the gift, increases with the power of him who receives it. Wordsworth was the true and faithful poet of lowly lives, and as such he is endeared to humanity; he was the second great democratic poet, succeeding Burns, from whom he learned to be such, as he says; but he comes more directly and intimately into our own lives through his personal force — through his own experience of what nature meant to him.

In what sense, then, is Wordsworth a race-exponent? Principally and distinctively in the fact that he sums up, illustrates, and amplifies the experience of the race in its direct relation to nature. With that primitive mind on which I have dwelt, he spanned the difference between the earliest and the latest thought of the race; to him, in certain moods, nature was animated with a life like our own, he believed it enjoyed its life as we do, and this is primeval belief; at the other end of progress he was as pantheistic as he was animistic here, and saw nature

only as another form of divine being. Thus he contemplated nature almost as the savage and almost as the philosopher, and commanded the whole scope of human thought with relation thereto. He presented nature through this wide range as a discipline of the soul in its development; it is, first, a discipline in beauty, in the power to see and appreciate loveliness, and he especially values this as a means of building up a beautiful memory — perhaps the chief consolation of advancing life. So, in the lines to the "Highland Girl," he writes:

> "In spots like these it is we prize
> Our Memory; feel that she hath eyes:"

So he wrote again of that inward eye

> "Which is the bliss of solitude" —

and illustrates it by the vision of the daffodils; and in the same spirit counsels his sister:

> "Thy mind
> Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
> Thy memory be as a dwelling place
> For all sweet sounds and harmonies."

Secondly, it is a discipline of the emotions, which nature evokes and exercises. The emotion is represented, nearly always I think, as that reverberation of feeling which I spoke of. Perhaps its most spiritualized example is in Tennyson:

> "Tears, idle tears: I know not what they mean,
> Tears from the depth of some divine despair,
> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes
> In looking on the happy autumn fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more."

The reverberation of emotion, here, is the poem. It is this reverberation, truly speaking, which Wordsworth interprets as the sense of the divine presence in nature:

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts" —

Thirdly, it is a discipline of the moral sense. Here, perhaps, we have most difficulty in going along with Wordsworth. When he says:

> "One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good
> Than all the sages can:"

when he writes of himself as

> "Well pleased to recognize
> In nature, and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being" —

we do not readily understand his meaning. Yet if you recollect his life, as his poems disclose it like a series of anecdotes of what happened to him, you see not only how often he returned from his rambles in the hills with a strengthened moral mind in consequence of some lesson he may have derived from some flower or cloud, which spelled out for him in an image of beauty his secret thought, or set up by an initial impulse that train of feeling which resulted in meditative moral thought, but how much more often he returned so strengthened by the sight of some human incident, history or character which to him wore the aspect of a fact of nature; for he did not discriminate between nature and its operation in the

lives of common folk; all life is necessarily moral, and nature by passing influentially into the lives of his dalesmen and shepherds became thereby moral in essence; nature exceeded its bounds here, in the moral sphere, just as in becoming divine it exceeded its bounds in the spiritual sphere. Wordsworth was no pantheist; he had the dews of baptism upon him and remained in the pews of the establishment all his life; but, both in his pantheistic verse, and in his verse ascribing moral wisdom to nature, he sincerely described certain experiences of his own in which he derived religious emotion and moral strengthening and enlightenment through his contact with nature and the natural lives of his neighbors on the moors and hills. Emotion was always mainly fed in him, imaginatively, from the forms of nature; and the strengthening of emotion, and the habit of it, necessarily builds up the moral nature of man — it is the mode of its nurture. I am accustomed to say that Keats is a poet to be young with, and that Wordsworth is a poet to grow old with. The element of habit counts for much in such communion with nature as Wordsworth illustrates; for it is not any flash of thought he brings, any revelation of emotional power as a sudden discovery of the soul; the power of nature has begun to steal upon the boy, in his skating or his nutting, or his whistling to the owls, and thereafter it only grows. Meditation, too, is a large element in the habit Wordsworth establishes toward nature, and memory, as we have seen, bears a part in it. It follows that, not only is his power over his readers cumulative with years, but his attitude toward nature must have the force of habit with us before it can render to us what it rendered to him. With the formation of this habit comes that consoling power which lovers

of Wordsworth find in his verse, what Arnold called the healing power of nature. I do not myself see any healing power of nature in such instances as Michael, or Ruth, or the affliction of Margaret; there are wounds which nature cannot heal, and Wordsworth was sensible of this: he did not, as Arnold says he did, look on "the cloud of mortal destiny" and put it by; no English poet can. But it is true that in the life-long appeal that Wordsworth's verse makes especially to the sober and aging mind by virtue of its equable temper, its moral strength, its simple human breadth of sympathy, as well as by its supreme rendering of the spiritual uses of nature in our daily lives, its tranquillizing power is also a main source of its hold on the general heart.

Such, in its phases, is the discipline of nature for the soul as Wordsworth presents it. The poetic act, as I have said, is the going out of the soul. If we do not fare forth on any quest of the old knightly days, yet all life consists in such a faring forth, in going out of ourselves into some larger world, practically into a club or a church or a college or a political party or a nation — in literature it consists in going out into the race-mind, in any or all its forms, into the life of the race as an idealized past, or as a part of present nature or present humanity. I have illustrated, hitherto, the imaginative or spiritual forms of history, and to-night the imaginative or spiritual forms of nature, in either of which the soul may take its course in the larger life, and going out of itself find the freedom of the universe its own — in beauty, reason, liberty, righteousness, love — the ideal elements to which all paths, whether of history or nature, lead, when imagination is the guide. It remains only to illustrate the

same general theory by the example of the poet who dealt most powerfully with human life as a thing of the present as Wordsworth dealt most powerfully with nature in the same way. That is the next, and final, lecture.

VIII

SHELLEY

In lecturing on Wordsworth I did not refer to his best-known verses, the half-dozen lines which have more luminousness of language, I think, than any other English words:

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

"Magnificent poetry," said John Stuart Mill, "but very bad philosophy." However that may be, the lines express the idea, natural to all of us, that we are in some sense heirs of past glory. We are accustomed to think of heredity, as something founded as it were in past time under the operation of the laws of natural selection, and stored in us physically; and embryologists say that the long series of physical changes, in consequence of which man finally became in his body the lord of living creatures, is reflected with great rapidity in the human embryo, so that when the body is born it has in fact passed through the entire race-history in a physical sense. We are no sooner born, however, than we enter at once on a new period of heredity, and acquire also with great ra-

pidity the mental and moral powers which originally arose slowly in the race through long ages of growth, and we become civilized men by thus appropriating swiftly funds of knowledge and habits of thinking, feeling and acting; this is the education which makes a man contemporary with his time, and perhaps it normally ends in the fact, for most men, that he does what is expected of him, and also feels and thinks what is expected of him. That is the conventional, well brought up, civilized man.

There is a third sphere of heredity, with which these lectures have been concerned, in which it is more a matter of choice, of temperament and vitality, whether a man will avail himself of it, and appreciate it. Men, generally speaking, are but dimly aware of their powers and capacities outside of the practical sphere; in our growing years we require aid in discovering these capacities and exercising these powers; we require, as it were, some introduction to ourselves, some encouragement to believe we really are the power of man that we are, and some training in finding out vitally what that power of man in us is. This is our use — the earliest — of literature; it interprets us to ourselves. It does this by fixing our attention on some things that we might not have noticed — on natural things of beauty, and by providing appropriate thoughts and stimulating delightful emotion in respect to these things; or it helps us by arousing feeling for the first time, perhaps, with regard to some part of life, and by giving noble expression to such new feeling or to some emotion hitherto vague and indeterminate in our bosom; and it especially aids us by giving play to our forces in an imaginary world, where both thought and feeling may have a career which

would be impossible to us in our narrow world of fact. The poverty of not only the young, but of most men, in spiritual experience, is probably far greater than men of maturity and culture readily conceive; it is possible that the forms of the church even far exceed the capacity of the people to interpret them, just as Dante, or any high work of imagination would. The poets interpret what is forming in us, and offer new objects of contemplation and emotion in the imaginary world; they go but a little way before us, for they can be read and understood only by the light of our own experience; but hand by hand, one leads us to another till we are in the presence of the greatest. I do not know whether Shakespeare unlocked his heart, as Wordsworth said, with the key of the sonnet; but I know literature is the key which unlocks our own bosoms to ourselves; though, in consequence of that respect for the individual life of the soul, which is one of the mysterious marks of man's nature, no hand but our own can turn the lock in its wards. What I described the other night as the poetic act — the going forth of the soul — must be the act of the man himself; but it is through literature that the paths make out — the highways trodden by many feet.

As you go out on these great highways of the soul, in Dante, in Shakespeare, in Goethe, a strange thing will happen to you: it will seem, in the variety of new ideas, in the flood of a new feeling arising in you, that you are changed within, that you have found almost a new self. I remember once when I was studying the now lost art of wood-engraving, looking as I was at hundreds of woodcuts constantly, it happened that when I went out to walk, I saw woodcuts in the landscape; my eye having grown accustomed to certain line and form-arrange-

ments of an artistic sort, naturally picked out of the general landscape such arrangements, as you make pictures in the fire; that is to say, my eye, dwelling on this feature and neglecting that, composed the landscape, made a picture of it. Now that is the constant act of life. The human soul finds the world a heterogeneous mass of impressions; and it attends to certain things, and neglects others, and composes its picture of life that way; prefers certain memories, certain desires, and so builds its own world, as I have constantly said. It applies this method of composition even to itself. You read Byron, and before you know it you see yourself in Byron's ways, you pick out and favor your Byronic traits, you find you are Byron in your self-portrait; or you read Thackeray and you find yourself in "Arthur Pendennis"; or, on the broader scale, you read Greek a good deal, Greek history and art as well as literature, and you find you see the world as a Greek world — or, again, as a French world, as the case may be. The change is a great one, amounting almost to the discovery of a new world and yourself a new self in it. So, in Goethe's life, the Italian journey and the study of the antique made a new and greater Goethe of him. So the mind of Milton, originally English, was Hebraized, Hellenized and Italianized. The discovery of the new self may often be repeated, and each new self enters into and blends with the old selves, and makes your personality, or, at least, gives form to it. So the young Roman poet was Homer and Lucretius and the Alexandrians, and is Virgil; so the young Italian was Virgil, and is Dante; so the young Englishman was Theocritus, was Catullus, was Keats, and is Tennyson. What is involved, you see, is a kind of mental embryology; just as the phy-

sical man sums up rapidly the age-long change from the lowest to the highest creature-life, just as the conventional man sums up in the same way the ages from barbarism to civilization and spans them in his education, so here the soul in its highest life — that free soul that I have spoken of — sums up and spans the difference between the ordinary man and the highest culture the race has ever known, and now holds in his own spirit that accumulation, that power of man, which (by heredity entered into of his own choice) makes him an heir of past glory — for the splendor, the leading light, the birth-light of which Wordsworth's verse is none too extravagant an expression.

Literature, then, is the key to your own hearts; and going out with the poets you slowly or swiftly evolve new life after new life, and enter partially or fully on that race-inheritance which is not the less real and sure because you must reach out your hand and take it instead of having it stored in your nerves and senses at birth; predispositions to appropriate it are stored even there, but it is a thing of the spirit and must be gathered by the spirit itself. You will, perhaps, pardon one word of warning. This process that I have described is a vital process, a thing of life, and it must be real. There is always at work that selective principle by virtue of which you compose life in the ways most natural to you. It may well happen that some great author does not appeal to you, and the reason is that you have not in yourself the experience to read him by; moreover, being a process of life, this process is one of joy, and if any author, no matter how great, does not give you pleasure, the process is not taking place. Therefore, do not read books that, after a fair trial, give no pleasure; do not read books

that are too old, too far in advance of you. If they are really great, they will come in time; but if, for example, Dante's "Inferno" is a weary place to your feet and your soul feels its thousand contaminations, do not stay in such a place; and so of all other books with names of awe. Honesty is nowhere more essential than in literary study; hypocrisy, there, may have terrible penalties, not merely in foolishness, but in misfortune; and to lie to oneself about oneself is the most fatal lie. The stages of life must be taken in their order; but finally you will discover the blessed fact that the world of literature is one of diminishing books — since the greater are found to contain the less, for which reason time itself sifts the relics of the past and leaves at last only a Homer for centuries of early Greece, a Dante for his entire age, a Milton for a whole system of thought. To understand and appreciate such great writers is the goal; but the way is by making honest use of the authors that appeal to us in the most living ways. The process that I have described is the one by which all men advance and come into their own — men of genius no less than others: for I cannot too often repeat the fundamental truth that the nature and power of the soul, its habits, its laws and growth, are the same in all men; it sometimes happens that a man who goes through the process of this high spiritual life, becoming more and more deeply, variously and potently human, developing this power of man in him, has also a passion for accomplishment — and that is one of the marks of a man of genius. Shelley was such a man; and I desire to present him, as a man with a passion for accomplishment, but also as an extraordinarily good illustration of the mode in which a man, through literature, evolves the highest self of which man-

kind is capable, summing up in his own soul the final results and forward hopes of the race.

At the outset let me guard against a common misconception. Shelley is too often thought of as having something effeminate in his nature. This is due, in great part, to his portrait which with all its beauty, gives an impression of softness, dreaminess and languor; in it there is little characteristically masculine. It is also due, in some measure, to the preponderance of feeling over thought in his verse, of imagery over idea, and in general of atmosphere over form; his is what we may call a color-mind. The misconception of Shelley to which I refer is most boldly stated by Matthew Arnold, who called him an "ineffectual angel beating his beautiful wings in the void." Now nothing could be said of Shelley that is more wrong than that. Shelley was a high-spirited, imaginative child; he was a resolute Eton boy — who would not fag, you remember, and being always persistent in rebellion, carried his point; he rode, and shot the covers in his younger days, and was a good pistol-shot, all his life delighting in the practice. He was a very practical man, in business affairs, after he came of age and had learned something of human nature. He was the only man who could handle Byron with tact and reason. He made a very good will. In fact, his practical instinct developed equally with his other qualities. Neither was he a moping poet. He had fits of high spirits — of gaiety; he used habitually to sing to himself going about the house. As boy and man, both, he was typically English, aristocratically gentle in all his ways and behavior, only nervous, impulsive, strong, willful, quick to see, quick to respond — a very determined and active person; and, in fact, manly to the full

limit of English manhood. Perhaps there is always something feminine in poetic beauty — the expression that we see typically in the pictures of St. John the Beloved; but, apart from that light on his face and that grace in all his ways, Shelley was as manly a man as they ever make in England.

This being premised, then, one reason why Shelley is so good an illustration of the development of a modern soul is the fact that the record with respect to him is so complete. No human life, with the exception possibly of Lincoln's, has been so entirely exposed to our knowledge, from his earliest days: it seems as if nothing of him could ever die, no matter how slight, boyish and trivial it might be. Thus it comes about that we see his forming mind in its first crudities. He was an eager boy, alive, awake, interested, voracious, pressing against the barrier of life for his career. He began with a taste for the most extravagant, melodramatic romance — what was then known as the German tale of wonder, in which the young Sir Walter Scott had also taken much interest; it was what we should describe as a dime-novel taste, except that its characters were monks and nuns and alchemists and wandering Jews; Shelley himself wrote two romances and many short poems and one long of this sort by the time he was sixteen years old, and published them moreover. He was always impatient, quick to act, to be doing something. His imagination was first fed by this sensationalism, and it was also scientifically excited by the spectacular side of chemical experiments; and then he began to think — at first it was politics — such things as the freedom of the press, the rights of Catholics, reform; or it was morals — such things as property, marriage; or it was metaphysics —

such things as Locke's sensational philosophy, and the ideas of the age. Radical ideas in all their imperfection of newness filled his mind, reform took hold of him. He went to Ireland to make speeches, and made them, distributed tracts, subscribed to funds, helped men who were prosecuted, especially editors, got himself put under observation as a dangerous character: and he was not yet twenty-one years old.

There was then little sign of poetic genius in him; he had always written verses, of course, but there is no line of his early writing that indicates any talent even for good verse. But his mind had dipped in life, in thought, in action, and was impregnated with all kinds of power; especially his mind had dipped in ideas — the ideas of the perfectibility of mankind, of experimental method in science, of immediate social change in England in such fundamental things as wealth and marriage. He was always a person of convictions rather than opinions; he wanted to live his thoughts, and together with his great causes he carried about a full assortment of minor matters, such as vegetarianism, for example. In a word, he began as a Reformer, and he was as complete an instance of the type as ever walked even the streets of Boston. But he found language more generally useful than action in standing forth for his ideas; and great command of language having already accrued to him through the incessant hammering of his brains on these ideas, making them malleable and portable and efficient for human use, there came to him also that intenser power of language, that passion of expression which finds its element in noble cadences and vital images of poetry as naturally as a bird flies in the air. Yet the passage from the power of prose to the power of poetry in

Shelley is not a very marked advance. What he discovered, in writing "Queen Mab," his first real poem, was the opportunity that poetry gives for unfolding a great deal of matter with logical clearness and eloquent effect, with immense concentration and intensity; what he discovered was the economy of poetry, the economy, that is, of art, as a mode of expression; and, in fact, when he had written "Queen Mab" he found — to use the words I have habitually employed — that in its few hundred lines he had emptied his mind; he had done what genius always does. The poem, however, was a Reformer's poem; it contained a striking rendering of the image of the starry universe, an account of the history of man's progress, and some delicate poetical machinery in the mere setting of the piece. Its true subject was social reform. Five years later he emptied his mind a second time in the poem called "The Revolt of Islam"; in the interval he had withdrawn more from individual enterprise and special causes in the contemporary world, and had come to realize the power of literature, as greater than any he could exercise otherwise, in the bringing of a better world on earth; but he still held to political and social reform, and wrote, under the example and in the stanza of Spenser, this allegorical tale of the Revolution and the successful reaction against it then displayed in Europe; the poem remains an inferior poem, in consequence of its material and method; but it contained all that was in Shelley's mind at the time, and was written in the model and method of what was then to him the highest art. Five years again went by, and he again emptied his mind in the "Prometheus Unbound."

In the interval great changes had taken place in him. He was still further removed from practical measures of

reform — not that he ever lost interest in them — but practical reform requires a machinery that he could not provide; and he now more fully recognized the power of ideas, of eloquence to stir men's hearts, of poetry to embody images of the ideal with mastering force; and especially he recognized the fact that practical reform is a thing that from moment to moment results from abstract principles which have an eternal being. Moreover, he had fallen in with Greek, in this interval, with Greek choral poetry on the one hand, and with Greek Platonic philosophy on the other. His mind was Hellenized; like a dark cloud, his soul approached the dark clouds of Æschylus and Plato; and the contact was an electrical discharge of power: the flash of that discharge was the "Prometheus Unbound." Furthermore, Shelley's poetical faculty had developed marvelous brilliancy, sensitiveness, color, atmosphere, sublimity of form, suffusion of beauty, and, all this, with a lyrical volume, intensity and penetration of tone, which his earlier verse had not shown. He had become, under the play of life upon him, a poet, so throbbing with the high life of the soul that he seemed like an imprisoned spirit, with the voice of the spirit, calling to men like deep unto deep; and the world seemed to lie before him transfigured, wearing a garment of outward beauty like a new morning, and, in the human breast clothed with freedom, nobility, hope, such as belongs to the forms of millennial days. Shelley had gathered into his heart the power of man that I have been speaking of, and stands forth as its transcendent example in his age. He had dropped from him, like hour-glass sand, the specific things of earlier days, things of the free press, of Catholic rights, of putting reform to the vote, of national association, of

Welsh embankments — all things of detail; and also all lesser principles of property or marriage laws; he had reached the fountains of all these in the single principle of the love of man for man, which alone he was now interested to preach and spread. He had let go, too, of all revolutionary violence, as anything more than a secondary means of reform, and he clung to the principle of patience, of forgiveness, of non-resistance, as the appointed means of triumph, as I have already illustrated in treating of the "Prometheus." "I have," he wrote, in his preface, "a passion for reforming the world": it was his fundamental energy of life; but reform for him was not now to be discriminated from the preaching of Christ's Gospel. The boy who had begun with a dime-novel taste had come into such etherealized powers of imagination that the poem of "Epipsychidion" is, perhaps, the extreme instance of ideal purity in English; the boy who had begun with Locke's sensationalism had come to be the most Platonic man of his age in his spirituality: the boy who had begun with an indignant challenge to orthodoxy had come to be the voice of Christianity itself in its highest forms of moral command; the boy who began as the practical reformer had come to be the poet, smiting the source of all reform in the spirit itself, and using all his powers of thought, imagination, learning, and all the means of art, to set forth the ideals of the spirit in their eternal forms. He had passed through politics, philosophy, religion — through English and French and Greek ideas — through Italian and Spanish imaginative art, and he now summed in himself that power of man which he had lived through in others — it had become his, it had become himself. In the whole course of this development no trait is more

important to observe, than his marvelous intellectual honesty; he took only what at any moment was capable of living in him; he gave it free course in his life, outlived it, transmigrated from it, and came to the next stage of higher life, and so won on to the end.

The development of Shelley was as rapid as it was complete; he was not yet thirty years old when he had become the center of human power that he was, a center so mighty that it would be two generations before its influence in the world, and its comparative brilliancy among English poets, could begin to be measured. His genius, we now see, was that of a double personality; he had, so to speak, two selves. First, and primary in him was his social self, his public self, that by which he was a part of mankind, was interested in man, felt for man, suffered in man's general wretchedness in Europe, brooded over his destiny, formulated principles for his regeneration, and lived in the hopes, the faith, the struggle of mankind. The greater works of his mind, which he elaborated with most conscious aim to serve the world, were the ones I have named, "Queen Mab," "The Revolt of Islam" and "Prometheus Unbound," with the later, almost episodical choric drama, called "Hellas," whose subject was the Greek Revolution then going on: all these were the expression of his social self. In early life, so absorbed was he in politics, morals, and philosophy, that he hardly realized he had any life except in these; but, as years came on him with their load, he developed a personal self, private and individual, the Shelley who was alone in the world, on whom fell the burden of discouragement, the penalty of error, the blows of fortune and circumstance, the wounds of the heart; and it was in this self that his poetic power was first put forth;

his sensitiveness, his response to nature, his lyrical enthusiasm, his aspiration, his melancholy; and he carried over these powers to the expression of his social self, as he carried over all his faculties and resources to that cause. But the home of his poetic genius was in his personal life; and the poems by which he is known as an artist, as a mere human spirit without reference to any special application of its life-work, are those in which the personal self is directly and spontaneously expressed, the "Alastor" being the first, and after it the "Adonais" and the "Epipsychidion"; and in addition to these longer pieces, the short lyrics, odes and stanzas, and the fragments, all of which are effusions, overflowings of his own heart. If the sense of his greatness is most supported by the larger creative works of his imagination, he is most endeared to men by these little poems of love and sorrow, of affection, of joy in nature, and of human regret. The most poignant of them are those in which the aspiration is itself a lament — and in them is the intimacy of the poet's heart. It is impossible to close one's eyes to the fact that Shelley, wholly unappreciated as he was by the public, or in private for that matter, was deeply dejected in his last years; the personal, the artistic self, was always a relatively increasing part of his life, and he occasionally attempted great works, like the "Cenci" or "Charles II," which had no social significance. Had he lived, it can hardly be doubted he would have become more purely an artist, a creative poet, conceiving the cause of mankind more and more largely as a spiritual rather than an institutional cause, a cause of the re-birth of the soul itself rather than of the re-birth of nations. In his personal self one principle reigned supreme — the idea of love; love guided all his actions, and was

the impulse of his being — love in all its forms, personal, friendly, humane; by that selective principle that I spoke of he saw life as a form of love. It is here that the true contact occurs between his personal and his social self, for he made love — the love of man for man — the principle of society regenerated as he pictured it in the "Prometheus." And again, he made love, in the "Adonais" the principle of Divine being — that Power,

> "Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
> Sustains it from beneath and kindles it above."

Wordsworth found the presence of God in

> "The light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air" —

primarily as something external; Shelley found it primarily as something known most intimately and clearly in his own heart.

A poet of really high rank is seldom a very simple being; he is made up of many elements, some one of which usually has the power of genius, and when that is at work in him, he is great. In Shelley there are at least three such elements; he was a poet of nature, and especially he had the power to vivify nature almost as the Greeks did, to give it new mythological being, as in "The Cloud." He was also a poet of man — the thought of man was like a flame in his bosom. And he was a poet of his own heart, putting his own private life into song. A poet is greatest when he can bring all his powers to bear in one act — then he gives all of himself at once. Shelley most nearly did this, I think, in the "Ode to the West Wind." The poem arises out of nature, in the triple aspect of earth, air and ocean, held in artistic unity by the

West Wind blowing through them; and it becomes at its climax a poem of the hopes of mankind, and Shelley himself as the center of them, like a priest. So he invokes the West Wind to which by his act he has given an imaginative being as if it were the spirit of the whole visible world of air, earth and sea:

> "Be thou, spirit fierce,
> My spirit, — Be thou me, impetuous one!
> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,
> Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
> Ashes and sparks, — my words among mankind."

"My words among mankind." That is not the voice of an ineffectual angel. It is the rallying cry of a great and gallant soul on the field of our conflict. When you read the "Ode to the West Wind," see in it the great elements of nature grandly presented and the cause of mankind in its large passion, and the spirit of Shelley like the creative plastic stress itself that

> "Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
> All new successions to the form they wear."

Such are some of the ways in which Shelley entered into the life of men as Wordsworth entered into the life of nature, and leads the way for those who have hearts to follow. Dip in life, as he did, with honesty, with enthusiasm, with faith, and whatever be the starting point at last you emerge on those craggy uplands of abstract and austere beauty and reason and righteousness and liberty and love —

> "Whereto our God himself is sun and moon;" —

the fountain-heads whence flow all the streams of the ordered life of the vale. I have illustrated this process of life by the idea of the eye composing a picture; so the soul selects its most cherished desires and memories, and comes to be the soul of an artist, or a soldier, or an engineer, as the case may be. Let me vary the illustration, and say that our problem is, in the presence of the world before us lying dull and crude and meaningless at first, to charge certain things in it with our own thought and feeling, and so to give them meaning; thus our familiar rooms of the house, and the fields round about it, for example, gain a power and meaning which is for us only; the stranger does not feel the welcome that the trees of the dooryard give to him who was born under them. But we find, as our minds go out into life, things already charged with emotion and thought, like the flag or the cross; and when the flag is brought to our lips and the cross to our breast, we feel the stored emotion of the nation's life, the stored emotion of Christian sorrow, in the very touch of the symbol; life — the life of the world pours into us with power. And we find, again, ideas that are similarly already clothed with might — charged with the hearts of whole nations that have prayed for them, with precious lives that have died for them:

"Names are there, nature's sacred watchwords" —

liberty, truth, justice; and, if we possess our souls of them, the power of man flows into us as if we held electric handles in our palms; beaded on the poet's verse, dropt from the lips of some rapt orator, they thrill us — and the instancy, the fervor, the inspired power that then wakes along our nerves is, we feel, the most authentic sign that we are immortal spirits. And men

there are, who seem like nuclei and central ganglions of these ideas, whose personality is so charged with their power that we idolize and almost worship them — what we call hero-worship. Such a man Shelley was, and is, to me. I remember as it were yesterday, when I was a freshman at Harvard, the very hour in that cold library when my hand first closed round the precious volume; and to this day the fragrant beauty of that blossomed May is as the birth of a new life; and when I read Wordsworth's ode, —

> "Not in entire forgetfulness
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come" —

I think of those first days with Shelley. To others it is some other book, some other man — Carlyle, Emerson, Goethe — whoever it may be: for the selective principle always operates to bring a man to his own; but in whatever way it comes about, the seeking mind gets connected with these men, books, ideas, symbols, through which it receives the stored race-force of mankind; so each of us, passing through the forms of developing life, receives the revelation of the world and of himself, grasps the world and is able to express himself through it, to utter his nature, not in language, but in being, in idea and emotion, and becomes more and more completely man, working toward that consummation, which I began by placing before you, of the time when the best that has anywhere been in the world shall be the portion of every man born into it.

I must crave your patience for yet a final thought, which, though it may be hard to realize, yet, if it be realized only at moments, sheds light upon our days. Of

all the webs of illusion in which our mortality is enmeshed, time is the greatest illusion. This race-store, our inheritance, of which I have been speaking, which vitalized in our lives is race-power, is not a dead thing, a thing of the past; all that it has of life with us is living. Plato is not a thing of the past, twenty centuries ago; but a mood, a spirit, an approach to supreme beauty, by the pathway of human love; Spenser's "Red Cross Knight" is not an Elizabethan legend, but the image of the Christian life to-day; and the hopes of man were not burnt away in the fire that consumed Shelley's mortal remains by the bright Mediterranean waves, nor do they sleep with his ashes by the Roman wall; they live in us. I have made much of the idea that all history is at last absorbed in imagination, and takes the form of the ideal in literature; it is a present ideal. We dip in life, as Shelley did, and we put on in our own personality these forms of which I have been speaking all along — forms of liberty, forms of beauty, forms of reason — of righteousness, of kindliness, of love, of courtesy, of charity, of joy in nature, of approach to God — and these forms being present with us, eternity is with us; they have been shaped in past ages by the chosen among men — by poets, by saints, by dreamers — by Plato, by Virgil, and Dante, by Shakespeare and Goethe, who live through them in us; except in so far as they so live in us, they are dust and ashes: Babylon is not more a grave. But these ideal forms of thought and emotion, charged with the life of the human spirit through ages, are here and now, a part of present life, of our lives, as our lives take on these forms; casting their shadows on time, they raise us, as by the hands of angels, up the paths of being — we are released from the temporal, we lay hold on eternity, and

entering on our inheritance as heirs of man's past glory, we begin to lead that life of the free soul among the things of the spirit, which is the climax of man's race-life and the culmination of the soul's long progress through time.

THE INSPIRATION OF POETRY

Eight lectures on Poetic Energy, delivered before the Lowell Institute of Boston, 1906

I

POETIC MADNESS

THROUGH all the space of years, from the morning of the world almost till yesterday, the poets were a race apart; mortal, they yet shed a celestial gleam; dying, they remained deathless; more than any other class of men they typified immortality. The Greeks, those originators of the intellectual life, fixed for us the idea of the poet. He was a divine man; more sacred than the priest, who was at best an intermediary between men and the gods, but in the poet the god was present and spoke. "For," said Socrates to Ion, "not by art does the poet sing, but by power divine. . . . God takes away the minds of poets and uses them as His ministers, as He also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God Himself is the speaker, and that through them He is conversing with us." The poets themselves give the same testimony. Spenser says that poetry is "no art, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct, not to be gotten by labour and learning, but adorned with both; and poured into the witte by a certain Enthousiasmos and celestiall inspiration." Shelley has the same doctrine in mind when he says, "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man." Poetic energy, according to this view, is inspira-

tion, anciently conceived as a madness taking possession of the poet, and in more modern times as a divine prompting of the reasonable soul. This is the unbroken tradition of literature from the beginning with respect to the nature of poetic power.

It is to be feared, however, that this doctrine to-day has little convincing force. Even in the words of Socrates there is a suspicion of irony, and perhaps Spenser and Shelley put more faith in their own words than ever their readers have done. Yet when all reservations have been made, there remain in the thoughts of all of us respecting poetry some glimmerings and decays, at least, of the idea of inspiration. It is the vogue nowadays, when any question is asked with regard to the soul, to apply first to the anthropologist; and, indeed, to inquire concerning the history of an idea is one of the best means to inform ourselves of its meaning. It might be pleasant to enter the charmed circle of the Greek myth, to listen for snatches of Lityerses' song like music before dawn, and have sight of Orpheus, a shining figure on the border of the morning; but such a procedure would only discredit our argument. It is necessary to go to the anthropologist and be wise.

What does the student of primitive man tell of poetry at her birth? In place of the divine child, upon whose mouth bees clung in the cradle, what does the anthropologist show us? He shows us the dancing horde. "On festal occasions," says a recent writer, "the whole horde meets by night round the camp-fire for a dance. Men and women alternating form a circle; each dancer lays his arms about the necks of his two neighbors, and the entire ring begins to turn to the right or to the left, while all the dancers stamp strongly and in rhythm the

foot that is advanced, and drag after it the other foot. Now with drooping heads they press closer and closer together; now they widen the circle. Throughout the dance resounds a monotonous song." The song is sometimes one sound interminably repeated; sometimes it is more extended, as, for example, the words "Good hunting," or "Now we have something to eat," or "Brandy is good." In the undifferentiated, homogeneous social state called the horde, there was no poet, just as there were no other men with particular callings; but all the horde were poets; and this, which I have read, was their poetry. Such is the anthropologist's account, and it is a true account. Indeed, it is plain from the evidence that primitive men found many utilities in rhythmical expression. Rhythm was used to mark time in joint labor and on the march, as it is still employed by sailors, boatmen, and soldiers; the songs of labor and of war have this origin; and in that primeval time, when language was hardly formed upon the lips of men, rhythm was the means by which the joint expression of emotion was effected on festive occasions. Rhythm was, so far as expression was concerned, the social bond. Lying on the sands at the base of the pyramids, or amid the ruins of Luxor, as the afternoon wore on, I have heard the chant begin among the throng of workmen, and as they hurried by with their baskets of earth it was no fancy for me to believe that in their shrill, unceasing, and ever louder cry I listened to the cradle hymn of poetry.

If one looks at the matter more closely, the seeming gap between these sharply opposed conceptions of the divine poet and the singing and dancing horde begins to disappear. Greek tradition itself gives the clew to

their reconciliation. Socrates, in the passage which I have quoted, compares the poet to the wild Bacchic revellers in their frenzy — that is, to what is no more nor less than the singing horde of Dionysus in their sacred orgy. The history of the Greek stage shows clearly how tragedy was developed from an original joint exercise about the altar of Dionysus, in which all united; it was only by the gradual change of time that the assembly fell apart into the audience on one side and the performers on the other, and even then, you know, the chorus remained as the delegate of the whole assembly until in turn it also yielded to the ever increasing function of the actors, and theatrical individuality in dramatic performances was fully developed. Without entering upon detail, the Greek tradition indicates the evolution of poetry from its social form as the joint rhythm of the horde to its individual form as the song of the divine poet who held all others silent when he discoursed. In this evolution the poetic energy itself remains the same, however much its form may change; whatever explanation may be given, whether it be regarded as divine or human, the phenomenon is continuous and identical.

The first radical trait of poetry throughout is the presence of emotion; and this to so marked a degree that it is characteristically described as madness. Civilized men sometimes forget the immense sphere of emotion in the history of the race. It is still familiar to us in the actions of mobs, in the blind fury or blind panic to which swarms of men are subject. In history we read of such emotion seizing on the people as in the time of the Flagellants, who went about scourging themselves in the streets, or generally in periods of revolu-

tionary enthusiasm. Such emotion is known to us, also, in orgiastic or devotional dances, in the old-fashioned revivals, and in the fury of battle that possesses every nation when its chiefs have declared war. This is the broad emotional power in the race that is the fountain of poetry. Emotion is far older than intellect in human life; and even now reason plays but a faint and faltering part in human affairs. If in the civilized portions of the world the ungoverned outburst is less than it was, or seems less, it is mainly because in civilization emotion has found fixed channels.

This emotion, which is the fountain of poetry, it should be observed, is the broad fund of life; it is nothing individual; it is always shared emotion. The second radical trait of poetic energy, therefore, is that it is social. The poet, however aloof he may be, is always in company with the hearts that beat with his own heart, and like Saadi —

> "He wants them all,
> Nor can dispense
> With Persia for his audience:"

for he is the voice of his people. In times past, and on the great scale of literary history, this is evident; nor is it less true of the most solitary lyrical poet of modern days than of the old dramatist or epic bard; for even that most secretive poetry, which we fitly say is "overheard," has its value in proportion to its being overheard by the like-minded, whose minds it fills. The third trait of poetic energy, as seen in its continuous phenomena, is that it is controlled emotion. Rhythm is used from the beginning to control movement, as when two men strike alternately in a common work; or, as when rowers

dip their oars together; or, as when the throng dances in chorus; and at the same time it governs the unisons of the emotional cries. Rhythm is the germ of art, its simplest form; and poetic art as distinguished from poetic energy may be defined as the principle of control in the emotion in play. Poetic energy, then, as it appears historically, is shared and controlled emotion; it is primordial energy rising out of the vague of feeling; it is social; and for the principle of its control in general there is no better word than music, or harmony in the old, broad sense of that term.

It is one of the difficulties, I fancy, of the staid New England folk who sit at the feet of Emerson, to find the sage affirming that the perfect state of life is ecstasy. From the beginning to the end he repeatedly announced this law; and by ecstasy he meant precisely what the Greeks meant by poetic madness. In his essay on poetry he puts his finger on the ailing place when he says that American poetry lacks abandonment, and he extends the diagnosis to all American life when he exclaims: "O celestial Bacchus! drive them mad — this multitude of vagabonds, hungry for eloquence, hungry for poetry, starving for symbols, perishing for want of electricity to vitalize this too much pasture, and in the long delay indemnifying themselves with the false wine of alcohol, of politics, or of money." In many passages Emerson thus pleads for the principle of the dervish, the mænad, the god-intoxicated man, in whatever sphere of life; the man who is self-abandoned to the energy of life that wells up within him, and in being "passion's slave" finds his illumination and his enfranchisement.

I know that it is common when the masters give expression to such bewildering ideas to say that they did

not mean what they said, and to explain away the words by a liberal application of common sense. But it is more likely that the masters do not say half what they mean; for in such souls, living in a white heat of conviction, expression lags far behind their faith. It is but just to Emerson, however, to add that he had adopted the idea from others, and he naïvely remarks that it is singular that our faith in ecstasy exists in spite of our almost total inexperience of it. The doctrine itself, nevertheless, is one of the most persistent of human beliefs, and is always springing up in some quarter of the world.

We have to do only with the fact that from the beginning to a late period of civilization poetic genius was identified with a certain madness. The poet was the heir of the wild and frenzied bands of Dionysus. In this case, however, the madness is slowly qualified. Whether poetic ecstasy is divinely inspired, whether it be the most perfect state of life, or whether it is only a survival from that period of exaltation which may have accompanied man's escape from brutish life, is not at present the question. It is not characterized by an unbalanced or diseased reason or by any temporary fury and aberration; it is characterized rather by a suspension of reason. The plain truth appears to be no more than that, in proportion to the degree of emotional excitement, the operation of the mind tends to become instinctive, and in the crisis of passion becomes wholly so. The two traits that most struck observers of poetic inspiration were its involuntary and its unconscious character. The will is laid to sleep, and the mind works without conscious self-direction. Any lyrical poet, like Goethe, for example, is familiar with the process; he looks upon some scene with no thought of writ-

ing verses, and suddenly, out of nowhere, the song sings itself in his brain, and his only part in it is to remember and write it down. It is not more strange in the case of a poet, whose brain is beat into rhythm, that a mood should so discharge itself in musical images than that when you sit down before the fire, vivid pictures should of themselves rise before your mind in revery. The spontaneous action of the mind, carrying with it oblivion of self, seems the essential factor in poetic inspiration, as it is known to us from the poets' autobiographies. Emotion is the unloosed force; and always emotion tends to obliterate the reason, not only by dulling and destroying the principle of caution, but also to such a degree that after the access of emotion has passed, words and even acts are brokenly, and sometimes not at all, recalled.

It is to be borne in mind that emotion of this drifting and possessing sort is primary in human nature. It may well be that the state of primitive man was more dreamlike than we easily fancy, that as he emerged from the brute his mental state was still casual, lax, uncertain, subject to torpid intervals, and coursed by waves of panic fear and strange expectancy. The great effort of civilization has been, and still is, the attempt to introduce a principle of control into that casual swarm of impressions which makes up men's thought and of which, especially when swayed by emotion, spontaneous action is the law. The poet, then, under excitement, seems to present the phenomenon of a highly developed mind working in a primitive way; what is called his madness denotes nothing abnormal, but is rather an unusually perfect illustration of the normal action of emotion in a pure form; he is mad in so far as he does not

call either will or reason to his aid, but allows unimpeded course to the instinctive expression of passion.

Passion, then, is the birthright of the poet; without it he is nothing. That is why the poet works himself into the hearts of men; for emotion is fundamental in life; as a possession, as an energy, life has its value in its emotional moments. It is true that now for a long while we have tried to intellectualize life; it is the great aim of literary education. But the life that is led in thought, from history and travel and learning through all its compass, is life at secondhand. The reality lies, in general, in emotional contact. If two men exchange thoughts, they are fellow-beings; if they share an emotion, they are brother men. The poet comes, and either reflects or arouses emotion and shares the gift he brings, and is thus always and in all lands the dear comrade of men. Emotion is the fusing force which unites the poet with his fellow-men; but first in his own career it has united him with life.

The mode in which it does so is simple. It is most plain in that part of experience which directly addresses the senses and is absorbed therein. The poet who is especially open to the things of nature, for example, to color and bloom and weather, to the motion of the seas and the infinity of the stars, to the exhilaration of a swim or a ride, does with his body drink the light of the world and the joy of existence. How many pages of the most welcome verse simply reflect this natural joy of living! It is not the image but the delight of the image, not the event but the joy of the event that exalts sensation into poetry. In a similar way emotion fuses the poet with ideas. The type is, of course, the fanatic who is so possessed with the idea that he becomes

no more than its instrument and living embodiment. The revolutionary poets display this power with clearness; in the great songs of the French Revolution the Dionysiac quality, the presence of the mad throng, the singing horde, had its last great literary illustration; and wherever a poet sings the causes of mankind, there is this fanatical blending of his own soul with the idea. But whether in the senses or in the soul, emotion throughout the field is the life itself; thought is only the means of life; and even in the case where great thoughts, such as scientific conceptions, of themselves generate sublime emotion, the consummation of the thought is not in the knowledge but in the emotion.

The sign of the poet, then, is that by passion he enters into life more than other men. That is his gift — the power to live. The lives of poets are but little known; but from the fragments of their lives that come down to us, the characteristic legend is that they have been singularly creatures of passion. They lived before they sang. Emotion is the condition of their existence; passion is the element of their being; and, moreover, the intensifying power of such a state of passion must also be remembered, for emotion of itself naturally heightens all the faculties, and genius burns the brighter in its own flames. The poet craves emotion, and feeds the fire that consumes him, and only under this condition is he baptized with creative power. It is to be expected, therefore, that the tradition of the poet's life should have an element of strangeness in it; and, in fact, to neglect those cases where genius has touched the border of actual madness, every poet has this stamp of destiny set upon him. There is always some wildness in his nature; he is apt to be roving, adventurous, unforeseen; he is with-

out fear, he is careless of his life, he is not to be commanded; freedom is what he most dearly loves, and he will have it at any peril; that from which he will not be divided is the primeval heritage, the Dionysiac madness that resides not only in the instincts, but in all the faculties of man — the power and the passion to live. It is a widespread error, and due only to the academic second-hand practice of poetry, to oppose the poet to the man of action, or assign to him a merely contemplative rôle in life, or in other ways deny reality to the poet's experience; intensity of living is preliminary to all great expression. From the beginning, about the rude altar of the god, to the days of Goethe, of Leopardi, and of Victor Hugo, the poet is the leader in the dance of life; and the phrase by which we name his singularity, the poetic temperament, denotes the primacy of that passion in his blood with which the frame of other men is less richly charged.

The poet seems always a lonely figure; but this is the paradox that the more lonely he is, the more he is a leader. The second trait of poetic energy is that it is a social power, and this is no whit less essential than its emotional basis. It is true that in early times poetic energy in its rude forms, as the rhythm of labor, of war, of the feast, had a larger social place and extended more widely over primitive life; it was not then individualized at all. Rhythm originally was more obviously the social bond, in joint movements of the throng, than it is now in the arts developed out of it — sculpture, music, and poetry. The greatness of all the arts, it has been widely and justly proclaimed, lies in their social character; in so far as they minister only to individuals they are sterilized. Literature is the greatest of the arts because its

social scope is most extended and most penetrating. What holy cities are to nomadic tribes — a symbol of race and a bond of union — great books are to the wandering souls of men; they are the Meccas of the mind. Homer was to Greece another Delphi. In the geography of the mind national literatures stand like mountain ranges, marking the great emotional upheavals of the race; such are the sacred books of all peoples; such was the literature of Greece, the glory that shone when reason came to birth among men; such were the outburst of Italian poetry and the particular periods of greatness in the modern literatures of Europe. Great literatures, in other words, are formed along the lines of fracture in the social advance of the race. It is true that supreme social value seems to belong rather to the books of past ages; but this is largely an error of perspective, for distance is essential to the measurement. The race is content to live long on the memory of such achievement; and the channels of social emotion on the great scale having been once worked out, the moods of men flow therein for a long age.

The fixity of these ancient channels, too, is an essential factor in the problem of poetic energy. Plato recommended that no poetry be allowed in the state except hymns of a fixed ceremonial character; and curiously the fact is that literature always tends to approach that state of tradition. Life everywhere hardens into formulas; and thus in literature books become established as classics, schools of poetry become academic, expression becomes formulistic. Emotion, that is, discharges itself through accustomed channels, through images and phrases and cadences that have become its known language; as, for example, was the case with that special

form of poetry known as Petrarchan. The emotion is genuine, but the form is old. When it has been shown that Shakespeare employed in his sonnets the conventional European expression of emotion, it has not been shown that the emotion was not genuine, but merely that the poet used a conventionalized art. How much of reality can exist in conventionalized art the whole early history of painting and sculpture shows. The expression of emotion is generally conventional, and the more social it is, the more is it conventionalized.

The poet, therefore, new born in the world, finds the field preoccupied. Religion, for example, is supplied with literary expression in its Bibles and hymns, and besides has the works of the other arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, and in addition, the splendor and awe of its ritual. The national passion, patriotism, finds embodiment for itself in long-established literature as well as in other ways. In fact, the poet finds social emotion already ritualized, if I may say so, in every part of life. He enters into no rivalry with the work which has already been accomplished by his predecessors; he rejoices in it, but it is not his work. It follows that the new poet is necessarily the exponent of emotion in new fields or turned toward new objects; he is an experimenter, as it were, in life; and this accounts often for his hard fate. If he is to be great, he is already on that line of fracture in social evolution of which I have just spoken. He sometimes stands in the light of an unrisen day. Hence, in his own time, he may appear even antisocial. How often has the poet been denounced as an atheist, as a revolutionist, an innovator, a wild thinker and rash actor, and always as a dreamer! It it because his natural habitat is there, in the new and

unknown stir of the world coming to birth. It is altogether natural that he should be discredited, unrecognized or disowned, that he should go hungry and often starve, that he should die in poverty and neglect, that the very name of the poet in history should be a synonym for sorrow and want. This has been his lot in all ages, and if any poet has escaped it, he has done so by a miracle. The contrast between his poor and solitary state and his after fame is one of the fascinations that fasten the eyes of men upon him. It seems strange that a great social force should have resided in so despised an individual. But the world's work is not done in crowds, though crowds are the instruments and beneficiaries of it. Where the man of science in his lonely study or silent laboratory toils in secret, where Newton or Pasteur works, there the brain of the race thinks, and wins its slow advance on the unknown; and where the poet is though he be in the wilderness, there the heart of the race beats. The poet, born for the future, will be found always in the thick of ideas and in the heat of the glowing world of change; he takes into his single breast the rising mass, and shapes upon his lips in silence the master words of many thousand men.

It might appear that the poet, who is thus a creature of passion and in the whirl of new social forces, is doomed to abide in a state of chaos; and the poet, in a certain sense, is the most lawless of men. Yet, as I have indicated, there is a principle of control; it is art. The original element of art is rhythm, that very measure of which the primitive cadence still times the poet's utterance; and it is true that the mere music of verse has a power of itself "in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion" to beget a temperance that gives it

smoothness. But art, though growing historically out of mere rhythm, is a broader principle, and as it grows, it becomes more and more an intellectual thing. In Nietzsche's phrase, this is Apollo's domain, the realm of intellect; for form is an intellectual thing. The dream, which accompanies emotion, is in truth its other and finite incarnation; it is the woof of color and image — all that is especially taken note of by the eye, which is the most intellectual of the senses, and by the understanding, which is the eye of the mind; whether in its physical representation, which is woven of the senses, or in its bodiless conception, which belongs to the higher life of moral contemplation and abstract truth, it is the idea; and it is this accompanying dream, this idea, this form of art, which gives relief to the emotion, disburdens, and quiets it.

The idea in this sense is the sphere of form; it is in this dream that the mind works, that art resides. It is this, too, that gives character to the emotion; for emotion is noble or base, wise or foolish, a power to save or a power to ruin, according to the objects and events toward which it is directed and the mode in which it envelops them. The development of the idea, the arrangement of its parts and phases, the order of the ode or the drama or the epic in unfolding its theme, is in poetry the labor of art; it is what composition is in sculpture or painting. This art, however, in the sense of a principle of control, has two modes; one lies in the dream itself, in its original emanation from the mind, in its substance; the other lies in its handling. The substance of the dream is one thing; the handling of it is another; and it is to the handling that what is called technique, the most conscious form of art, specially refers. It is to

be borne in mind, however, that just as poetic energy is not something brought down from heaven, but is the fire and motion of life itself, so the dream that attends emotion is not something artificially and arbitrarily united with it, but is given forth from it, and as naturally joined there as the flower to the root. Try as one may, one cannot in poetry — not even in its art — escape from the omnipresence of this secret power, the mystery that gives forth life, of that which is beneath all. It is one great use of works of art that they teach our eyes to see, even in nature and human life as they are, the beauty with which they are clothed in their actuality. Emotion, in its own natural expression, is a beautiful or pathetic or terrifying sight. There is an unconscious power in life itself to clothe its own emanation so; and of this power art is the follower in imagination. In the poet this instinctive power in himself gives the dream, the substance; he cannot tell how it arises in him; it comes as the smile comes to the lips or tears to the eyes — he knows not whence they are; and, furthermore, he is not yet the poet, but only the novice, if his technical skill is not also instinctively applied and the arrangement of the theme instinctively accomplished. In the stroke of genius there is no calculation. The poet does not scan his verses nor hunt his rhymes, any more than the musical composer seeks for concords; still less does he search for color and image and idea. He is as unconscious of his processes, even when originally acquired with difficulty, as the athlete is of the play of his muscles. The mastery of technique is, indeed, necessary to the novice, but it is only the tuning of the instrument; conscious art must pass into the hand, the eye, the brain, the heart, and there be forgotten, nor does it

become true power until it is so forgotten. The dream, the idea, both in its substance and its handling, its constituting form and its technique, is, in the work of genius, instinctive; unless it be so, it is flawed and incomplete. Art is a perfect principle of control only when it thus operates, as rhythm does, like a law of nature, from which, in fact, it is not to be distinguished; for it is that secret law of harmony unveiled in man's nature.

Poetic energy, so conceived, is a phenomenon of the spiritual nature of man, and is ruled, both in emotion and in idea, by its own inward law. The passion of life embodies itself in all men according as they have the power to live, in experience; and in the poets it embodies itself in imagination. The passion of life, which is the great mystery of the universe, shapes unto itself many forms in different ages, in different climes, under different gods. It has many births; and the miracle of this mystery is the diversity of these births, the novelty and surprise of each new morning as it breaks upon a world whose law is death and which is forever passing away. I said that the poet is the most lawless of men; that is because he lives in an ampler law, because the life that is born in him refuses to be bound in the old births of time; he breaks all conventions, he tramples on all superstitions, he violates all barriers; for he brings his own world with him, and new horizons. Emerson said that the birth of a poet is the chief event in chronology. He means that they mark the great changes in the minds of men. Wherever such a change is nigh, wherever the flame of life bursts forth with most power and splendor, there the poet is found; he is the morning and the evening star of civilizations. He is but one among men, but in his single soul the soul of mankind comes to fullest

consciousness of itself and is illuminated from horizon to horizon, from height to depth. He seems to men divine because he thus gives to them the divine part of themselves. His fame may be swift or slow, but in the end it fills the world. He is lawless, judged by the finite; but in his passion and his dream he has given himself to a higher law, and reposes on the infinite, of which he is the latest birth. So it seems to him. In these lectures I shall present the genius of six of these poets as illustrations of that passion and power of life in which poetic energy consists.

II

MARLOWE

MARLOWE is the very type of the poet whom I have described. "Mad" is the first epithet that comes to our lips in thinking of him — "mad Marlowe," — whether one looks at the wildness of his unregulated career or at the tameless force embodied in his genius or at the romantic extravaganza that is the body of his literary achievement. Brief and tragic were the annals of his life. He was born two months before Shakespeare; son of the shoemaker at Canterbury; educated at school and college; a scholar when he came down from Cambridge to London, which he entered the same year with Shakespeare; favored by the theaters and the public; a wild liver, impulsive, passionate, uncontrolled, giving his genius free way with himself for the eight years of his manhood during which he did his work; faithful to his intellectual part and industrious as he must have been to have accomplished all that he did; and killed in a tavern brawl at the age of thirty. This is all that we know of him; yet in every line of this story one knows that it is the epitaph of genius. He was in his own day denounced as an atheist and blasphemer, and his death was long cited as a notable instance of God's sudden justice. "Not inferior to these," says one account, "was one Christopher Marlow, by profession a play-maker, who, as it is reported, about 14 years ago wrote a book against the Trinity. But see the effects of God's justice!

It so happened that at Detford, a little village about three miles distant from London, as he meant to stab with his ponyard one named Ingram that had invited him hither to a feast and was then playing at tables, he quickly perceiving it so avoided the thrust that withal, drawing out his dagger for his defense, he stabbed this Marlow into the eye in such a sort that, his braines coming out at the dagger's point, he shortly after died. Thus did God, the true executioner of divine justice, work the end of impious atheists." So runs the Puritan's account of this tragic episode; and it is altogether likely that Marlowe, lawless in all ways, was a free-thinker, and being a child of the Italian Renaissance was then intellectually what was called Machiavellian in his ideas.

Notwithstanding this grewsome picture of the atheist's bloody death, it was not thus that the poets of that age saw the protagonist of their company who brought in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." Their tributes to his memory make us aware of an exceptional quality in the man, of the burning of a fire in him such as no other of his comrades knew the touch of, of something that transfigured him; and this transfiguration is seen in the fact that he alone of all that group was idealized by them in fancy. The poets brought flowers as if to hide the corpse of that grisly memory of his death. It is much that he who lay there was Shakespeare's "dead shepherd." The other lesser poets, whenever they speak of him, are instinctively touched with imaginative fantasy. Chapman, invoking the Muse, bids her seek Marlowe's spirit, and after death

> "find the eternal clime
> Of his free soul, whose living subject stood
> Up to the chin in the Pierian flood";

and in the flowing line we seem to feel the full flood of that stream of poetry as it broke forth in its own age. Drayton's oft-quoted words transmit the strange fire that was in the young poet's whole frame like a second soul: —

> "Next Marlow, bathëd in the Thespian springs,
> Had in him those brave translunary things
> That the first poets had; his raptures were
> All air and fire which made his verses clear;
> For that fine madness still he did retain
> Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

Personal fascination survives in this description — the transcendency of genius, seen, felt, touched, as it were, in its mortal body by mortal senses. Still another youthful poet, like Chapman, following the spirit with praise after death,

> "where Marlo's gone
> To live with beauty in Elyzium,"

gives us the contemporary glow of enthusiasm for Marlowe's eloquent and musical fancy:—

> "Whose silver-charming tongue moved such delight
> That men would shun their sleep in still dark night
> To meditate upon his golden lines."

It is by the light of such tributes as these that we recall and re-create the young poet,—in his rise the star of the Elizabethan morning, in his tragic fall, as Lowell called him, "the herald that dropped dead in announcing the victory in whose fruits he was not to share."

> "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burnëd is Apollo's laurel bough,"

we cry; the sense of the limitless power and suggestion of genius blends with the accident of its extinction in its first

burst — the pathos of what was never to be, the tragedy of a soul of price lost to mankind; and with this mood dumbly mingles the universal feeling of some darkness in poetic fate, and obtains mastery of the heart and controls insensibly the judgment. To all later poets, as to his contemporaries, Marlowe is a younger brother, struck by the shaft of unkind gods; something of that transfiguration that his fellows saw — the silver flood of beauty about him, the miraculous fire within him — still lingers, and he stays to abide our question rather in his spirit, in the might of unaccomplished resources, than in any created work that came from his hand.

One work there is, however, in which his youthfulness stands revealed, his tastes and sensibilities, the richness of his emotions, and the warmth of his life. The translation he made after Moschus, called "Hero and Leander," gave to English literature its single work of the pagan paradise, and it shows such an endowment of the soul and body of passion in the hand that wrote it and the heart that brooded it, as leaves its young author among English poets without a rival for sensuous happiness. The poem still stands alone; neither its mood nor its music has ever since been heard in England. It was plainly this poem that clothed Marlowe with that atmosphere of the golden age in which his brother poets saw him stand. By it he became for them the heir of classic beauty and the living token of that voluptuousness in the joys of the imagination which was the poetic charm of the Italian Renaissance; and to them he stood forth like an inhabitant of that fair realm, native to that air, and mixed with the figures and the landscape of his own vision. We can realize only faintly the power with which this great movement, the

Renaissance, the new and second birth of man's intellect and sense, came upon the nations of the West; with what vital surprise, what energizing force, what kindling impulses along the nerves of will and desire, with what intoxication of intellectual curiosity and artistic passion, this renovation of life in Italy fell in the second century of its accumulated mass, and made impact through a thousand channels on such an age as Elizabeth's and on such a fiery and sensitive temperament, such an originative and shaping genius as Marlowe's. This little poem, nevertheless, is like a single blossom from that world-wide field, and may give us the hue and fragrance of the Renaissance in flower, if we will: so a rose shadows us with Persia, or a single lotus blossom unbosoms all the Nile.

One quality the poem has, which specially characterizes it as Marlowe's handiwork — an excitement of the imagination resulting in exuberance of fancy, a stream of decorative art, an incessant welling up of imagery and epithet in profuse and exhaustless abundance; no poem is so fluent, so effortless, so negligently rich in this regard, so prodigal in its spending of the coin of fancy. In that age when all the seas first yielded to man, imagination, too, made her voyages of discovery, and brought home gold and pearl and the marvel of the loom from every clime; many a passage in the poets of those days is a museum in itself; and of this rifled wealth of the Elizabethan world, heaped from antique and oriental sources and every quarter of learning or of fable, Marlowe was a master. In "Hero and Leander" he showed only his prentice hand in this lavish piracy. It is, nevertheless, even there a sign of that overflowingness which stamped his genius from the first as of a royal

nature. He had neither to search nor to hoard, but only to spend. It was not, however, in a love episode, a few hundred lines in length, however stored with langour and beauty, that he was to show his wealth, but on the broad stage of England. The poet, nevertheless, was prior to the dramatist in Marlowe, as indeed all the Elizabethans were poets first and dramatists afterwards; and it was this poet, the child of Italy and the Hellespont breathing English air, that his brother poets loved and immortalized, before ever his greater fame as the first fashioner of a noble and lofty style for English drama was even dreamed of.

I own that the early English drama has caused me much weariness even in my youthful days, and neither would I now voluntarily read it, nor should I have the heart to subject any other to the trial. For men of English speech the drama is necessarily measured by Shakespeare; and in a certain sense he raises his fellows to his own neighborhood. So, when one stands upon the highest summit of some many-folded range of hills, the mere loftiness of his station makes the lower crowns, distinct and bold beneath him, seem little inferior; but when, on the other hand, descending, he makes one of them his perch, how the lonely monarch soars aloft! Thus it is when from Shakespeare's height men survey his fellows, the swelling names of that Elizabethan cluster. "Marlowe," they say, "on whose dawn-flushed brow the morning clouds too soon crept with envious vapors that the most golden of Apollo's shafts should never pierce more; Beaumont and Fletcher, twins of the summer noontide, and Chapman bearing his weight of forests with the ease and might of old Titans; Ford and Webster who made their home with the tempest and seemed

to leash the thunder;" and so on with all the others of the tremendous upheaval of the age. But when one leaves Shakespeare's ground, and descends to any of these, how tumid is all such description, while undiminished the king of the peaks still soars in the sky! It is not by our will that Shakespeare's altitude is made the measure of other men who were so unfortunate as to be born his rivals; one can help it no more than the eye can help seeing. His genius reduced all his contemporaries to perpetual subjection to itself; no superlatives can be offered in their praise except by his leave, and when their own worth is made known, the last service they do, in showing us how invaluable is Shakespeare's treasure, is perhaps the most useful.

Even Marlowe, in whose youth, if anywhere in history, was the promise of a mate for Shakespeare, needs the latter's withdrawal before he can tread the stage. Some would say possibly that Shakespeare might not have obtained entrance there with Lear and Othello, if Marlowe had not first fitted the tragic buskin to the high step of Tamburlaine; and in a sense the retort is just. The highest genius avails itself of those who go before to prepare the way, the road-makers building the paths of speech and opening the provinces of thought; but to be forced to stipulate at the outset that a great name in literature, such as Marlowe's, shall be considered only with reference to his turn in historical development is to make a confession of weakness in the cause; it is to forego his claim to be considered as a writer of universal literature. What the difference is, in Marlowe's case, is tersely indicated by the fact that competent students discern his genius in "Titus Andronicus," which in Shakespeare's crown is rather a foil than a gem. This

play, with Marlowe's touch still on it, would illustrate, if compared with Shakespeare's undoubted work, how cumbrous and stiffening were the shackles of the stage tradition from which Shakespeare freed the art. But in Marlowe's accredited dramas, say, in "Doctor Faustus" (to lay aside the rant of "Tamburlaine" as merely initiatory, tentative, and facile) the necessities of contemporaneous taste and usage are so tyrannical as almost to ruin the work for any other age. "Doctor Faustus" is a series of slightly connected scenes from the life of a conjuror, in which thaumaturgy and the hatred of the Papacy are made to furnish comic horseplay of a clownish kind; or else fear of the devil is used to freeze the blood of the spectators with the horns, hoofs, and fire of coarse horror. Of the dramatic capabilities of the Faust legend as a whole Marlowe indicates no perception. He caught the force of two situations in it — the invocation of Helen's shadow and the soliloquy; but though in treating these he exhibited genius as bold, direct, and original as Shakespeare's own, they are merely fragmentary. Except in these scenes in which Marlowe's voice really quells his time and sounds alone in the theater, the uproar of the pit frightens away the Muse and leaves comedy and tragedy alike to the ruthless disfigurement of the early English stage. In "The Jew of Malta," even if the first two acts are fashioned by dramatic genius as no other but Shakespeare could have molded them, the last three taper off into the tail of the old monster that had flopped and shuffled on the medieval boards on every saint's day. In "Edward II" alone is there drama, properly speaking; it is complete, connected, sustained, and it has tenderness, passion, and pathos; but though Swinburne gives it the palm in cer-

tain particulars over Shakespeare's "Richard II," which was modeled after it, the former will not bear comparison with the latter in dramatic grasp. To notice but one difference; in Marlowe's work the king's favoritism is so much an infatuation and a weakness that he loses sympathy, and his dethronement, apart from its brutal miseries, is felt to be just; while in Shakespeare Richard's favoritism is retired far in the background, and his faith in his divine right to the crown (never insisted on by Edward) is so eloquent, and so pervades and qualifies the whole play, that when the king is murdered, one is driven to believe that the bishop's denunciation of God's vengeance on the usurping Lancaster must prove true prophecy. In the matter of dramatic handling there can be no doubt of Shakespeare's more expert sense, though his ideality may make the characterization appear, as it does to Swinburne, less sharp. "Edward II" is Marlowe's best play; but, with this exception, his dramas in general are deeply engaged in the rawness of the time, dependent in many scenes on vulgar spectacle and buffoonery, on burlesque and rout and horror, Tamburlaine's chariot drawn by captive kings in harness, the nose of Barabas, which passed into a proverb for its enormousness, and similar features. So much must be allowed, lest the unwary making acquaintance with these plays should find but strange entertainment. Marlowe, as a dramatist, is not to be judged apart from his historical moment; nor are his works to be appreciated intelligently except by the student of the dramatic development of our stage.

But notwithstanding the crudity of Marlowe's works, as wholes, every page proclaims the transcendency of the genius, of the poetic energy, there at work. It is an

energy that has a volcanic lift, splendid, terrifying, filling heaven. Marlowe's great achievement, in the age of discoveries and rediscoveries, which blending together, constituted a renewal of man's life and brought a new world into being, was to rediscover the main source, the fountainhead, of dramatic power. He rediscovered passion, which is the substance of poetry, and made it the substance of the drama. He sympathized with great passions; and in order to sympathize with them he had first to be capable of great passions; that was his endowment. The first and abiding impression he makes upon the reader is that of power — of the presence in his bosom of the Dionysiac dæmonic force, — life clothing itself in restless creative faculty and calling new worlds into being in the intellectual sphere. He was a creator, and the clay he used was humanity, the human spirit, the soul. The Renaissance restored to man the dignity of human nature, gave the human spirit back to itself as a power of life. It unveiled the great achievement of antiquity in literature, in sculpture and architecture, in empire, and, perhaps most notably of all, in men. Nothing is more significant of the mood of the age than the regard in which Plutarch was held. Plutarch was, as it were, a resurrection of the mighty dead of Greece and Rome. The human soul had been capable of such lives, and of such works as the poets and philosophers and artists had wrought in classical times. The example was like a trumpet call; what man had done and been, man could still be and do. The romantic nations, Italy, France, Spain, and England, broke into sudden flower of literature and art and life, as when the sun in its northing clothes the whole hemisphere with springtime, and the force of nature is unloosed like a flood,

and belts the planet with new warmth and verdure. It is this unloosing of human faculty that characterizes the age; it was a broader phenomenon than we are apt to think; Shakespeare was but an incident in it.

This force was unloosed in Marlowe; to him, in his awakening, came the sense of the greatness of man, the miracle of human power, the desire to possess his soul of this greatness, to be in himself this miracle — the passion of life. Young scholar though he was and hardly fledged from college, he had got more than an education; he had found his mind. If he wrote a book against the Trinity, as was alleged, it is a fact that is certainly not recorded of any other of his fellows, and shows a philosophical interest, a mentality, different in kind from theirs. He was endowed with sensuousness and the warm delight in beauty, that is the rarest of English poetic traits and little welcome in that sluggish climate; he was also endowed with mind; but beneath both endowments lay that deep desire to live, that consciousness of the power to live, that passion to realize his desire in power, and for which there was no other pathway for him than the roads of the imagination. It was natural that what was most borne in upon his mind, the greatness of man and the presence in man's soul of all that potent faculty of which Greece and Rome and Italy were the form and impression, of which the freshly opened lands and seas, east and west, bore the promise of new world-careers — it was natural, I say, that this height of human nature which was foremost in his sense of life should be cardinal in his imaginative brooding whence issued the romantic dreams of his mind.

He first seized on the most obvious embodiment of human greatness, military empire, and on the prime bar-

baric passion, lust of dominion — on power in its most simple and sensual form, the power of the conqueror; he set forth in "Tamburlaine" the career of resistless victory ridden by a master of the world. Tamburlaine himself proclaims that mastery of inexhaustible ambition which is proper to man: —

> "Nature that framed us of four elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

For Tamburlaine the crown was the summit, but in the larger yearning of the speech, in such a line as

> "Still climbing after knowledge infinite,"

is the keynote of Marlowe's mood in all ways. The drama itself is an unchecked torrent of words, a flood of large language; it has an imperial breadth of flow, and bears the kingdoms like islands on its stream. It has become a synonym for bombast, but it excites and amplifies the imagination by its spaciousness, its epithets like "the hundred-headed Volga," and its terrible energy. There are many splendid passages of impassioned diction, many noble lines such as only the greatest masters know the secret of; but I can best convey to you that quality which I wish to bring out — the new Eliza-

bethan sense of the largeness of the earth and of the dream of empire over it — by the scene in which Tamburlaine at his death calls for the map of the world.

"But I perceive my martial strength is spent.
In vain I strive and rail against those powers
That mean to invest me in a higher throne . . .
Give me a map; then let me see how much
Is left for me to conquer all the world . . .
Here I began to march toward Persia,
Along Armenia and the Caspian Sea,
And thence unto Bithynia, where I took
The Turk and his great empress prisoners.
Thence marched I into Egypt and Arabia;
And here, not far from Alexandria,
Whereas the Terrene and the Red Sea meet,
Being distant less than full a hundred leagues,
I meant to cut a channel to them both,
That men might quickly sail to India.
From thence to Nubia near Borno lake,
And so along the Æthiopean Sea,
Cutting the tropic line of Capricorn,
I conquered all as far as Zanzibar.
Then by the northern part of Africa,
I came at last to Græcia, and from thence
To Asia, where I stay against my will: —
Which is, from Scythia where I first began,
Backwards and forwards, near five thousand leagues.
Look here, my boys; see what a world of ground
Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line
Unto the rising of this earthly globe;
Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,
Begins the day with our Antipodes!
And shall I die, and this unconquerëd?
Lo, here, my sons, are all the golden mines,
Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
More worth than Asia and the world beside;
And from the Antarctic Pole eastward behold

> As much more land, which never was descried,
> Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright
> As all the lamps that beautify the sky!
> And shall I die, and this unconquerëd?"

In this passage we are in the world that Columbus and the great voyagers discovered, and breathe its air as fresh as in those Elizabethan mornings when the wonder was still on it.

In "The Jew of Malta" Marlowe selected the second primary passion of man, the lust for gold, and he made Barabas a type of the love of wealth, as prodigal as was Tamburlaine of the love of empire. He it was from whose lips dropped the line

> "Infinite riches in a little room,"

and illustrated it by that glittering hoard which shows in fewest words the lavishness that is a constant trait of Marlowe: —

> "Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
> And seld-seen costly stones of so great price
> As one of them indifferently rated . . .
> May serve in peril of calamity
> To ransom great kings from captivity."

The passion of the Jew, like that of the conqueror, is single and alone. Marlowe desired a more unlimited play for the soul's infinite capacity, and in "Doctor Faustus" he showed that multiple thirst, which was the very image of the Renaissance, that thirst to exhaust all natures by possessing them, which only the secrets of magic could satisfy and allay, but which was a passion so deep-seated that the scholar would barter his soul

in exchange for that means of power. At this price Faustus obtained the satisfaction of every wish and was as supreme in this empire of the mind as Tamburlaine had been in the kingdoms of the world.

Infinite empire, infinite riches, infinite satisfaction of desire, are thus the three great themes of Marlowe, in these most characteristic plays; the desire, the passion, and the power of life on a grand scale filled his mind, and gave his imagination that grandiloquence which is the trait by which he is most eminent in men's memories. He had thus discovered passion as the substance of the drama, and had created great embodiments of it in characters that remain types never to be forgotten of the passion he delineated in each. To put the fact in a different way, he was the first great psychologist in English drama; he created psychology in it as a dramatic theme. He conceived these primary passions somewhat simply and abstractly, elementally; but in these plays he had already begun to find the counterfoil to passion, which is the other half of dramatic art, namely, the event; and as he went on in his art, and grasped the interplay of passion and circumstance which makes tragedy whole and complete as an image of human life, he guided the art into its proper element, history. That was his second great achievement as a fashioner of the drama in his day. In the earlier plays he had given passion its career in an ideal world; in "Edward II" he seized upon it in its confining bounds of history, and his work at once gained complexity and reality, or what is called probability; it became lifelike. It must be acknowledged that there is more vitality in "Edward II" than in Shakespeare's more expert development of the same theme in "Richard II." Richard suffers in his imagination, in his kingship, in

his idea of himself; but Edward suffers in his heart, and is in all ways warmer, tenderer, more manly. It was by this resort to history as the element of human drama that Marlowe obtained this vitality in the characters and actuality in the events; and by his example he put into Shakespeare's hands his 'prentice work in the historical plays, as he had already directed his interest to the psychology of the human spirit and the career of great passions in exalted types of the imagination. Marlowe was in these ways the forerunner, not only of Shakespeare, but of the dramatic age.

Marlowe performed another service, not only for the drama, but for English literature, and one that is forever associated with his name. He gave to English poetry its best instrument of expression — blank verse. It is true that blank verse had been used before and upon the stage; but it was Marlowe's distinction to develop the melody and rhetoric of blank verse, to give it eloquence, ardor, and passion, to make it throb and live; and from him, again, Shakespeare took it and through successive years molded and shaped it, made it flexible and plastic, till it became the most vital form of English speech. In Marlowe the line is still in its elementary stage; its value is there, but its value is often too exclusively a monotone and too frequently merely sonorous; the repetition is tedious, the sound is swelling and bombastic; on the other hand, it should be remembered that this sounding and gorgeous oratory, together with the eloquence and rhetoric, the excess of rich detail, the picturesqueness and ornament, the lavish fancy, all taken in one, was a means of securing that illusion of the imagination of which the bare and ill-furnished scenic stage of Elizabeth stood so greatly in need. In a certain way

this ranting and profuse language was a substitute for scenery, and helped to give the necessary elevation to the mimic stage. In his employment of blank verse, too, Marlowe showed the same rapid progress in the power of his art that distinguished him in characterization and in plot; and as he became accustomed to the measure, he dissolved its original monotone, broke it up into true melody, while at the same time he gathered temperance and kept nearer to the natural language of high passion, as in the great scenes of "Edward II" and of "Doctor Faustus." In all this, as in the rest of his art, he was a bold experimenter and learned by doing; but just as there was a gift of nature which underlay his sympathy with great passions, that Dionysiac dæmonic force within himself, so there was a gift of nature beneath his "mighty line." Style, the power and the feeling for noble language, was born in him; that *aliquid immensum infinitumque* that Cicero desired in the orator was innate in Marlowe; it was not merely the large words and rolling cadences upon his lips, but throughout the poet's make there was the sense and feeling of the infinite, seen at the lowest in the profusion of his fancy, and at the highest in the reach of his imagination in his great tragic scenes, but most apparent and condensed perhaps in that passage on poetic expression which no lover of Marlowe can forbear to quote, though it be familiar:

> "If all the pens that ever poets held
> Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
> And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
> Their minds, and muses on admirëd themes;
> If all the heavenly quintessence they still
> From their immortal flowers of poesy

Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit: —
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest."

The feeling of the inexpressible, which is in literature the sense of the infinite, was never told with more heart-felt conviction than in these lines. The style of Marlowe, as lofty as it is rich, where every line brims to the rim with melody or beauty or high feeling, is such as belongs to the man. It was Shakespeare's best fortune that he caught the golden cadence of his youth from such a master's lips.

Marlowe died at the age of thirty, and left this memory of himself which for splendor and beauty is fitly symbolized by the image of the morning star which has been so freely applied to him. It is not because of the perfection of his works that he is remembered; he left no single work of the first rank; a developed art is the prerequisite of great literature. He did not so much create great works as he rather originated the art itself by which great works should in their time be accomplished. I have indicated the specific service he thus rendered by concentrating the drama on passion, by sending it to history to school, and by giving it the instrument of blank verse; but I have not meant thereby to trace his historical significance, but to show forth more fully the strength that was in him, the immense poetic energy of which his genius was the phenomenon. He had the warmth and susceptibility of a youthful poet, but he had also a greatness of soul which we associate

with more manly years. He was an emanation of the Renaissance, one of that new brood of men which was like a new creation in the ranks of the angels of power. He was a forward-looking spirit; no fiber in him looked backward to the past; he was revolutionary. He was full of mastership; no part of his nature went in leash to any power in heaven or on earth; he was free. He was lawless, even, as it is the lot of genius to be because of the prophetic element in it by which it belongs to a world not yet come into being. More than any of his fellows, more even than Shakespeare to me, he seems self-absorbed in his own other world of imaginative art, and living there as in his own bright, particular star. He is the very type of genius, as I have said — the naked form of it — as bright, as beautiful, as neglectful of mankind, as free from any regards of earth as an antique statue that gives to our eyes the mortal aspect of a god.

III

CAMOENS

CAMOENS, the maker of the only truly modern epic, offers an illustration of poetic power which is to me one of the most interesting, although the foreignness of his subject-matter and the extraordinary lameness of its English translations make difficult obstacles to our appreciation; but for that very reason he has the happiest fortune that can fall to a poet in the fact that familiarity ever endears him the more. He is a less pure type of the flame of genius than Marlowe; poetic energy appears in him less a spiritual power dwelling in its own realm of imagination; but, on the other hand, his career admits us to a nearer view of a poet's human life, to what actually befalls the man so doubtfully endowed with that inward passion of life, in the days and weeks and years of his journey. Scarce any poet is so autobiographical in the strict sense. Others have made themselves the subject of their song; but usually, like Shelley, they exhibit an ideal self seen under imaginative lights and through the soul's atmosphere, and in these self-portraits half the lines are aspiration realized, the self they dream of; but Camoens shows in his verse as he was in life, with a naturalness and vigor, with an unconscious realism, a directness, an intensity and openness that give him to us as a comrade.

He was of the old blue blood of the Peninsula, the

Gothic blood, the same that gave birth to Cervantes. He was blond, and bright-haired, with blue eyes, large and lively, the face oval and ruddy — and in manhood the beard short and rounded, with long untrimmed mustachios — the forehead high, the nose aquiline; in figure agile and robust; in action "quick to draw and slow to sheathe," and when he was young, he writes that he had seen the heels of many, but none had seen his heels. Born about the year 1524, of a noble and well-connected family, educated at Coimbra, a university famous for the classics, and launched in life about the court at Lisbon, he was no sooner his own master than he fell into troubles. He was a lover born, and the name of his lady, Caterina, is the first that emerges in his life; for such Romeo-daring he was banished from court when he was about twenty, whether after a duel or a stolen interview is uncertain; and on his return, since he continued faithful to his lady, he was sent into Africa, and in an engagement with pirates in the Straits of Gibraltar he lost his right eye. He fought the Moors for three years until he was twenty-five, and returning to Lisbon, enlisted for the Indies; but in consequence of a street affair with swords in which he drew in defense of some masked ladies and unfortunately wounded a palace servant, he was held in prison three years. Eleven days after his release he sailed, and it is not unlikely that his sailing was a condition of his release. He rounded the Cape of Good Hope and came to India, where he served in campaigns and garrison, and occasionally held official appointments, and from time to time fell into prison. He cleared himself from all charges of wrong-doing in office; but he was of the type that makes both enemies and friends. He was

outspoken, and he indulged his mood in satire, a dangerous employment in the narrowness of colonial and army life. On the other hand, he was a brave and gentle comrade and delighted in manly traits; and so there was a round of companions in arms to whom he was dear. He served far and wide, fought on the coasts of the Red Sea, wintered in Ormuz in the Persian Gulf, spent some years in China, and seems to have visited the Malay islands; once he was shipwrecked on the Chinese coast. It is clear that he roamed the Orient on all the lines of travel and enterprise, of commerce and war, wherever the Portuguese ships could sail, and bore throughout the name and character of a gentleman-adventurer of that world, a daring, enterprising, hopeful, unfortunate, and often distressed man.

Sixteen years of his manhood passed in these toils —

"In one hand aye the Sword, in one the Pen,"

— along the tropical seas and under the alien skies; for from the first, even before in his youth he planted a lance in Africa, he had held to his breast that little manuscript book where year by year, on the deck and the gun-breech, in his grotto at Macao, in prison, wherever he might be and under whatever aspect of fortune, he wrote down the growing lines of that poem which is now the chief glory of his native land. When he was shipwrecked in China, he lost the little store of gold that he had accumulated in the office which he was recalled from, but he held safe this book —

"In his embrace the song that swam to land
From sad and piteous shipwreck dripping wet
'Scaped from the reefs and rocks that fang the strand."

Now, after sixteen years, nostalgia, not simple homesickness, but the nostalgia of him who fares forth into the world and voyages long in stranger-lands, had fallen on him, and was heavy in all his spirit. He had left Portugal, indignantly saying that his country should not possess his bones; but he had long changed this temper —

> "Tagus yet pealeth with the passion caught
> From the wild cry he flung across the sea"; —

all his hopes had really rested on the honor of the song he had built up for the glory of Portugal, and while everything else that men name success faded away and escaped him, with this poem surely he would find welcome home. He stopped at Mozambique with the captain governor, and when he wished to continue his voyage, this officer, who was his host, consigned him to prison for a debt due himself, a small sum. Soon afterwards, however, a ship came by, with a dozen of Camoens' old messmates and friends, veterans, and they contributed the money for his release. So, says the old biographer, "were simultaneously sold the person of Camoens and the honor of Pedro Barreto" for £25. With these friends Camoens sailed homeward, and arrived safely, but not to find prosperity. It was three years before his book was published; and he received for reward only a pension of about one hundred dollars in our money at its present worth, and this was not often paid. The entire eight years of his life at Lisbon were filled with such poverty and distress as we remember of the last dying days of Spenser and Chatterton. He lived some part of this time in a religious house, that is, an almshouse; at other times his Javanese servant, who had stayed with him, begged food for him at night, but the faithful servant died before his wretched master.

Even among the poets few have been so homeless and destitute as Camoens in his life's end, now going about on crutches and suffering the last sad effects of a hard-faring life. It was the moment just before his death when the power of Portugal was extinguished on the battle-field by Philip of Spain: "I die," he wrote to a friend, "not only in my country, but with it." The time of his death is uncertain, but he was about fifty-five years old. He died in a hospital. "I saw him die," says an old Carmelite brother, "in the hospital of Lisbon, without a sheet wherewith to cover himself." Such in its external events was the life-story of Camoens.

If one throws upon this harsh narrative the light that flows from Camoens' poetry, the lines are softened in the retrospect; the hardship and misfortune are seen in that atmosphere of melancholy that pervades his strong verse and blends with it, as tenderness companions valor in the man himself. To see properly the phases of his genius, one should glance first at the lyrical works, and especially the sonnets, that preceded and accompanied the heroic verse of the epic. From his student days at the university, unlike Marlowe, he was the heir of a developed art, and in all his work is seen the fair background of the poetic tradition — in the epic the forms of old mythology, and in the lyrics the Italian example of Petrarch. To him his lady Caterina was what Petrarch's Laura had been, an ideal of hopeless and pure passion. Her personality is not definitely known, but she married and died while still young. Though in his sonnets to her Camoens followed the poetic tradition, the reality of his devotion cannot be doubted in its inception; and in its continuance through the years of his youth, and especially of his long exile in the Orient,

this ideal passion stood for him, at least, as the sign and certainty of his first failure — his failure in love. It became, perhaps, after long and hopeless years simply the cry of his imagination, but it had its original being in the call of the heart. Very sweet and noble, though conventional, is his early pleading: —

> "Beautiful eyes, whereof the sunny sphere
> When most with cloudless clarity of light
> The infinite expanse he maketh bright,
> Doubting to be eclipsed, doth stand in fear:
> If I am held in scorn who hold you dear,
> Then, having of all things such perfect sight,
> Consider this thing too, that mortal night
> To cover up your beauty draweth near.
> Gather, O gather with unstaying hand,
> The fruits that must together gathered be,
> Occasion ripe, and Passion's clasp divine.
> And, since by you I live and die, command
> Love, that he yield his tribute unto me,
> Who unto you have freely yielded mine."

After years of vain castle-building during which he seemed his "own sorrow's architect," and in that wide roaming which he describes —

> "Now scattering my music as I pass,
> The world I range, —

he still kept true to the lover's creed: —

> "All evils Love can wreak behold in me,
> In whom the utmost of his power malign
> He willed unto the world to manifest:
> But I, like him, would have these things to be.
> Lifted by woe to ecstasy divine,
> I would not change for all the world possest."

When his lady died, he lifted his prayer in his loveliest and most famous sonnet —

"Soul of my soul, that didst so early wing
From our poor world thou heldest in disdain,
Bound be I ever to my mortal pain,
So thou hast peace before the Eternal King!
If to the realms where thou dost soar and sing
Remembrance of aught earthly may attain,
Forget not the deep love thou did'st so fain
Discover my fond eyes inhabiting.
And if my yearning heart unsatisfied,
And pang on earth incurable have might
To profit thee and me, pour multiplied
Thy meek entreaties to the Lord of Light,
That swiftly He would raise me to thy side,
As suddenly He rapt thee from my sight."

In these sonnets and other lyrical poems the poet is hardly more personal than in the heroic epic, but his personality is more exclusively felt, and the topics are not confined to his love. The most lasting impression made is of the passing of hope out of his life. Camoens was one of those souls who are great in hope; and he often bent upon the past reverted eyes, and drew the sum of his losses, ending in the refrain —

"For Death and Disenchantment all was made —
Woe unto all that hope! to all that trust!"

The vein of melancholy in the lyrical poems opens the tenderness of Camoens, and perhaps the softer note is somewhat overcharged in these admirable but rather Italianated version of Dr. Garnett's that I have used; life-weariness and profound discouragement, indeed, there is in them; but they are not the simple outflow of a Petrarchan lover's complaint, but the sorrows of a much-toiling man; for Camoens was both sailor and soldier, and as natural to those ways of labor as to the handling

of the lute. The voyage, the march, and the battle made up the larger part of his life.

This opens the second trait to be observed in the phases of his development, namely, his absorption of the patriotic vitality of his country. It is true that he inherited a developed and conventionalized art, and had always that fair background of classical figures and Italian atmosphere which were his portion of the Renaissance; but the Renaissance was rather like a little mountain city where he was born and drank his youth; he did not abide there, but came down into the great modern world that was then to be — the world of the waste of waters and the spreading empires. Portugal played a great part in that age which broke the horizon bars and passed the western and the eastern limit of the sun alike, and made the fleets as free of the ocean as the sea-birds of every wandering wave. Camoens was to make this the great theme of his song — the ocean fame of Portugal. But he was inducted into his passion of patriotism by natural ways, before the glory of the ocean discoveries was fully opened in his mind. Portugal, you remember, was the child of battle, born of the conflict of the Christian and the Moor; on the stricken field she found her crown itself, and became a state, and in maintaining the struggle that drove the Crescent back into Africa, and in following across the straits to free the seaboard, she developed her strength, laid up her most heroic memories, and built those navies that were to open and command so many seas.

When Camoens in his youth fought his first campaigns in Africa, he was united with his country's cause and honor in its great historic current, and it was by nature that there flamed up in him that national pride, hating

and triumphing over the Moor, which is the historic substance of his epic. He had found his theme in battling with the Moorish power. The realization of this theme, the patriotic past of his country, was the second phase of his development. Then came, with his long and perilous voyage and his years of wanderings through all the picturesque coasts of the East, that expansion and enrichment of his theme which reduced the original Moorish battle to the rank of episode and background, while the maritime greatness of Portugal, set forth in the story of the voyage of Da Gama round the Cape of Good Hope as the main action, became the more prominent subject. The poem itself yields these three main elements corresponding to the division that has been made: the background of classical mythology, which affords the mechanism of the plot, and is of the Renaissance; the history of Portugal which affords the time perspectives and the main episodes; and lastly the fortunes of Da Gama. The poem thus grew with Camoens' own growth, and contains his artistic training in the school of Renaissance tradition, his youthful African marches and raids, and his manhood voyages. He made it embrace the whole glory of Portugal, compressed into its stanzas all her romance, heroism, and fable from the earliest record in antique days to his own hour, spread in it the naval dominion of her great contemporary age; and he did this, not as a reminiscent scholar in Virgil's way or Tasso's way, but as one who had labored in the glorious action by sea and land, near the port and far in the open, boy and man, with sword and pen. The enthusiasm of a lifetime here gathers and gives out the passion of a whole nation and makes a people's glory one with the poet's fame. The "Lusiads" is the principal

monument of Portugal, and the chief national bond that binds her children in one.

It is this infusion of personality — and personality like Marlowe's of the daring Renaissance type — which makes the "Lusiads" so different from all other epics. The theme is not presented as an ideal action in remote time after the manner of other poets, but seems a real event, something that the poet had done and been. It is as if Ulysses had written the "Odyssey." Camoens was himself, like Ulysses, such a traveler, a romantic wanderer, a hard-toiling man, in the heroic exile of enterprise on the sea-edges of a larger and unknown world. It is this temperament of the wanderer that so endears him to all nomad souls. It is this which made him attractive to Captain Burton, for example, who made the labor of translating his works a part of his task for twenty years; and though it is marvelously unreadable, it is from his translation that I shall quote; for at times, and not seldom, he catches the spirit of Camoens as the sail catches the wind. The "Lusiads" is a sea-poem. No poem approaches it in maritime quality except the "Odyssey." The note of the whole is struck in Da Gama's account of the setting sail of the fleet from Lisbon: —

> "We from the well-known port went sorrowing,
> After the manner of far-faring men."

The fleet made out to sea, and this is the parting view: —

> "Slow, ever slower, banisht from our eyne,
> Vanisht our native hills, astern remaining;
> Remained dear Tagus, and the breezy line
> Of Cintran peaks, long, long, our gaze detaining;

Remainëd eke in that dear country mine
Our hearts, with pangs of memory ever paining;
Till, when all veilëd sank in darkling air,
Naught but the welkin and the wave was there."

The sense not only of the deep sea, as in this last line, but of the undiscovered, is constantly present — not only the illiminitable waste of waters, but the peril of them. It is a growing peril, vaguely felt at first beside the new islands and capes lately discovered, in the strangeness of the coasts by which the ships drop southward, in the adventures with the unfamiliar tribes at the landfalls; but the strangeness becomes peril, slowly and surely — that panic fear which is not for a moment of alarm but for days and nights of increasing dread — the mood which all great explorers have known, from Columbus to the latest, who have had to master their men with the desperate force of a higher courage and hold them to the onward course. It is this gigantic fear, rising from the endless rolling of the sea and driving of the cloudy winds in the pathless ways of the lonely sail — it is this fear that Camoens gives body and a name in the most daring and perhaps the most celebrated of the inventions of his fancy — the apparition of the giant phantom, Adamastor, off the Cape of Good Hope. Adamastor symbolizes the dangers of the ocean enterprise and the revenge of the elements outraged by the human victory over their brute power.

What Camoens there renders by imagination and allegory he draws again realistically in the account of the storm in the Indian Ocean. The storm in Shakespeare's "Tempest" is the only sea-storm that compares with it for majesty and violence, and at the same time for truth to sea-weather. The little picture of the nightwatch on

deck with which the scene opens gives perhaps in briefest space that unaffected naturalism which distinguishes Camoens' descriptions of actuality: —

> "All half-numbed and chill
> Shivered with many a yawn the huddling crew
> Beneath the bulging mainsail, clothëd ill
> To bear the nightly breath that keenly blew;
> Their eyes kept open sore against their will
> They rubbed and stretched their torpid limbs anew," —

and to keep awake they begin to spin yarns; in this case the fine chivalric tale of the Twelve of England — in the course of which the storm breaks on them with tropic suddenness.

The labor of the life is thus a main element in the poem, which is solid with experience and somber with it, also. Camoens delighted in his companions, those vassals of the king, "peerless in their worth," but it is the darker side of their lives that holds his imagination and memory alike: —

> "Look how they gladly wend by many a way: —
> Self-doomed to sleepless night and foodless day,
> To fire and steel, shaft-shower, and bullet-flight;
> To torrid Tropics, Arctics frore and gray,
> The Pagan's buffet and the Moor's despite;
> To risks invisible, threatening human life,
> To wreck, sea-monsters and the wave's wild strife."

The lonely death in a foreign land, always near in the prospect, imparts a deep melancholy to the verse, that true epic melancholy, which Virgil summed in that one of his most immortal lines where the dying soldier "remembers sweet Argos." Camoens was a man of friendships, of that comradeship which flowers only in such hardy soil, and many of his verses lament the un-

timely death of the brave heart in its youth. One sonnet on the death of a comrade in Africa, in the form of an epitaph spoken by the victim, best tells the story: —

"Few years and evil to my life were lent,
All with hard toil and misery replete:
Light did so swiftly from my eyes retreat,
That ere five lusters quite were gone, I went.
Ocean I roamed and isle and continent,
Seeking some remedy for life unsweet;
But he whom Fortune will not frankly meet,
Vainly by venture woos her to his bent.
First saw I light in Lusitanian land,
Where Alemquer the blooming nurtured me;
But, feeble foul contagion to withstand,
I feed the fish's maw where thou, rude sea,
Lashest the churlish Abyssinian strand,
Far from my Portugal's felicity."

The same mood, in the "Lusiads," fills the stanza which he dedicates to the memory of all who fell by the wave and along the trail: —

"At last in tangled brake and unknown ground
Our true companions lost for aye we leave,
Who mid such weary ways, such dreary round,
Such dread adventures, aidance ever gave.
How easy for man's bones a grave is found!
Earth's any wrinkle, ocean's any wave,
Whereso the long home be, abroad, at home,
For every hero's corse may lend a tomb."

Camoens is always directly faithful to the daily and hourly life, to the physical scene and the human manners; but his truth to the heroic spirit, the martial breath that filled the sails of the great enterprise, and also his truth to the sentiment of the wanderer, the

power whereby he renders the melancholy which falls from the dry and sterile Arabian peaks of rose-red rock, diffusing that nostalgia of the brave heart, heightening all that bravery so, and thereby renews for us, and illumines, that old type of the "much-enduring" man — all this constitutes a truth for which reality seems but a faint and shadowy name. It is the truth not merely of a voyage, but of man's life on earth — such as it is when poetry presents it most nobly, most feelingly, and without a veil. To Camoens the fortune of human life showed no smiling face; it was not in fortune but in character that he found life's value. He was a lover of heroic men, those

> "By the doughty arm and sword that chase
> Honor which man may proudly hail his own;
> In weary vigil, in the steely case,
> 'Mid wrathsome winds and bitter billows thrown,
> Suff'ring the frigid rigors in th' embrace
> Of South, and regions lorn, and lere, and lone;
> Swallowing the tainted rations' scanty dole,
> Salted with toil of body, moil of soul."

The character of Da Gama is very nobly drawn; he is all that such a leader should be; a figure worthy of his place in the poem, and of the fame to which he is exalted, akin to Æneas before him and to Tasso's Godfrey who was born after him. Camoens' morality, his conception of the character of "a good king, a great captain, a wise councillor, a just judge, a pure priest," as Burton draws the catalogue, is always energetic and lofty. Of all his personal qualities he is most proud of his own independence in judgment, his honesty of speech, his perfect and entire fearlessness. He returns repeatedly to this claim of truth-telling, which he thought was his duty as a part

of his fidelity to the Muses; and when he invokes their aid, he makes this his main plea: —

> "Aid me you only: — long indeed sware I
> No grace to grant where good doth not prevail,
> And none to flatter, whatso their degrees
> On pain of losing all my power to please."

In telling the story of Portugal, past and present, he had much occasion to use this high ideal; not even in those days did he hesitate to denounce and inveigh within the pale of the Church itself. Morality, in the high sense of character, pervades the poem; virtue, in the ancient and manly meaning of the word — the old epic "arms and the man" — is its substance, and charm is diffused over it as in the "Æneid." This charm partly arises from that oriental coloring — the *lux ex Oriente* — natural to the scene, in the detail of which, Burton says, Camoens rarely trips, being more accurate than most modern authors, and that experienced traveler wonders at the quality of the brain that amassed so much information from sources so few and so imperfect. The charm, however, lies also in the contrast between the realism of the matter and the fantastic power of Camoens' imagination, which is one of his most powerful and fascinating traits and peculiarly a feature of his originality. The Adamastor episode serves as an example; but a nobler one is the ideal figuring of the rivers Indus and Ganges, who appear like Neptunian forms in the dream of the old king which was one of the motives of the voyage. The variation by which the scenes of pictured history — a tradition of the epic and seen by Æneas, you remember, at Carthage — are here found spread on the banners of the festally decorated Portu-

guese ships is a happy play of the poet's fancy. The isle of Venus, that receives the homeward-bound fleet, is perhaps the most surprising, as it is certainly the loveliest, of these imaginative fantasies. But it is not by any piecemeal criticism and naming of passages that the quality of this epic can be conveyed.

Yet one must add still another of its larger elements, namely, its spaciousness. I mean the map of the world, like that map in Marlowe's "Tamburlaine," that it unfolds. Camoens describes the European quarter early in the poem, beginning from Russia and sweeping southward and west, leaving England entirely out as if it were Iceland of to-day, and finding, of course, in the little state of Portugal the climax and summit of the world. It is a perspective to which our thoughts are unused, but in its day was not an untrue one; and for us to have it in mind — to emigrate into it, as it were — is a prerequisite to the appreciation of the "Lusiads," for such was Camoens' world. He also describes the voyaging of the fleet with great detail. But it is in the last book of the poem that the face of the new earth is shown, magically in the mystic globe of the planetary sphere, to Da Gama by the Siren: that new earth, fresh as it then arose from the uncovered waters — the Asian seas and continent and islands, the African coasts and uplands, and the unknown west far as through Magellan's Straits; it is a wide reach, a finer vision than Milton gave from the specular mount, and with it as in its own horizons the epic ends.

The "Lusiads" is the only truly modern epic, but one seems to breathe in it the early air of the "Odyssey" and "Iliad" more than in any intervening poem; like the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," it has no love element in

its plot, but the old heroic life — man's life of the oar-blade and the battle-field — rules the scene. The sense of primitive life, however, is still deeper-seated, in its neighborhood to nature, where the sky is the tent of the bivouac and the roof of the deck-watch, and man is a solitary figure in the landscape, and life a hand-to-hand affair. Into that far alien field of earth and waters the pride of Portugal is carried, as it were, on the banners of a little squadron conquering a mighty world. It was fitting in the Peninsular war that the regiments of Portugal went into battle with lines of Camoens inscribed upon their flags. Yet it is a narrow view that would see in the "Lusiads" only the self-glorification of a little state. It has a larger significance. The blending of the East and West at a great dawn of history is here rendered in a noble form of human greatness, cast in the lives of a few brave men equal to great tasks.

Such are a few of the traits of this epic. But what a fiery soul must that have been which could carry such a passion of poetry through the years of exile and ever cherish it as a life above life itself! The deep melancholy of Camoens, as it gathered in later years, is plain; his failure in love — the hunger of the heart that was never to be appeased with any earthly touch of the ideal — was but the sign of the famine that fell upon him in all the ways of success. He had no talent for success. He was filled with poet's blood, as the pure grape with wine. He was wild and free, amorous, framed for enjoyment, Southern-hearted, a boon comrade, a tender friend; between the prison and the camp and the ship's deck he had a soldier's gaiety, was fond of fine apparel and of golden suppers — the adventurer's changeful fortune; but failure was all he found in the East, and the

profound discouragement of his lot invaded his heart at last. He reviewed his life in one of his last sonnets.

"In lowly cell, bereaved of liberty,
Error's meet recompense, long time I spent;
Then o'er the world disconsolate I went,
Bearing the broken chain that left me free;
My life I gave unto this memory;
No lesser sacrifice would Love content;
And poverty I bore and banishment;
So it was ordered, so it had to be.
Content with little, though I knew indeed
Content unworthy, yet, aloof from strife,
I loved to mark Man's various employ.
But my disastrous star, whom now I read,
Blindness of death, and doubtfulness of life,
Have made me tremble when I see a joy."

The passing of hope out of his life was the history of his soul. He came home only to make disaster sure, as the event proved. Sick, old with wounds, the almshouse gave him to the hospital, and the hospital to the grave, as a corpse is cast from wave to wave till it sinks into a nameless tomb. It seems — it is — pitiful.

"Woe unto all that hope! to all that trust!"

It is the epitaph of most of the poets. Yet it is from the consuming flame of such a passion and power of life as burnt in this much-enduring soul that poetic genius gives out its immortal star.

IV

BYRON

It is an error to think of Byron as an English poet; he was expatriated not only in his person but in his genius; and this partly accounts for the fact that his reputation so soon became, and still remains, Continental. He was not a poet of what was always, for him, the dismal island of his birth. He was rather a poet of the Mediterranean world. There he found the main material of his works — the motive, the stage, the incidents, and the inspiration — the picturesque and romantic scene of his imagination, ranging from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Golden Horn. He stamped his memory there — still felt — from Calpe to Stamboul. Portugal and Spain, Albania and Greece were his earliest topics in verse after his boyish preluding was done; Italy was the main theme of his most majestic manhood poetry; and by a nearer and internal tie the Italian literary tradition entered into his genius and characterized his style. England need not have troubled to refuse him so often and so long a niche in the Abbey; for wherever his bones may lie or tablets of grateful honor he erected, Greece is the true shrine of his memory, and will always be so. In all things that pertain to the immortal part of him, he thus belongs to the Mediterranean; and it is only in the perspective of those broken coasts, in the purple of those lonely islands, in the high atmos-

phere of those snow-clad and thronging peaks that his genius is seen as in its home.

He was but a youth and in the first flush of his poetic blood, when the Mediterranean revelation came to him, on his first voyage. He entered the south by Lisbon. The moment was a true awakening; and so natural that he was not aware the poet was born in him; and later he was still clinging to his adolescent and apprentice work — such as the "Hints from Horace" — for the hope of reputation, when by the publication of these first Mediterranean moods, he "awoke and found himself famous." But his fame was not more sudden than the awakening had been. He responded at once to that disclosure of the Mediterranean beauty, which is a romantic marvel to all Northern eyes;

> "Ah me, — what hand can pencil guide or pen
> To follow half on which the eye dilates?"

and one feels his new throb of life in the mere amplitude of description that overflows even from the earliest stanzas: —

> "The horrid crags by toppling convent crowned;
> The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep;
> The mountain-moss by scorching skies imbrowned;
> The sunken glen whose sunless shrubs must weep;
> The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
> The orange fruits that gild the greenest bough,
> The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
> The vine on high, the willow branch below,
> Mixt in one mighty scene."

Byron had the poet's temperament, full and strong — the peril in his blood, the wildness of impulse, the lawless will, the passion of life. He was fresh from his first angers with life, and had gone out from England seeking

an escape — some air of freer breath, some horizon to wander in. It was now that the love of the ocean was confirmed in him; for in his experience it was a love of Mediterranean waves. It was from them, as he sailed onward, that the Corsairs' song was caught: —

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home!"

It was a great adventure for this youth of twenty years — such a voyage into the Levant. It was a free life — such freedom as he had never known — and it was romantic in its scene and human incident, its mingling with more primitive men of strange aspect and rough hardihood, its combined naturalness and foreignness. He never forgot its pictures; and he drew one for all in that passage of "The Dream" which describes in brief these wanderings: —

"In the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruined walls that had survived the names
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while
While many of his tribe slumbered around;

And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in heaven."

This admirably composed oriental scene may stand for the circumstance and atmosphere of this voyage as Byron himself remembered it, but it needs to be supplemented by the more stirring scenes, such as his reception by the Suliotes when the weather forced him and his crew to land on that doubtful coast: —

"Vain fear! The Suliotes stretched the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks, and past the dangerous swamp,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And filled the bowl, and trimmed the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare — though homely, all they had."

Through such contact with nature, with the picturesque and primitive, with wild and savage or broad and solitary scenes, Byron's imagination first took on its romantic color; and the free life he led in the open, on the sea and in camp, loosed in him that spirit of adventure which in his verse took the cast of desperate love and pirate warfare — the passion and brigandage of the Levantine East. They were almost natural elements in that environment; and in idealizing them the ardors of his own young temperament found an imaginative form. Byron never again lived so fully and keenly, either imaginatively or in the merely physical sense, as in this early year of his Mediterranean roving. He was not a natural wanderer, a born traveler, like Camoens. He never heard the call of the wilderness nor obeyed the *Wander-lust*. This voyage was only such a one as any young Englishmen might take for pleasure, for sport. Nevertheless, to him, being a poet, it constituted his awakening, and stirred and freed him,

and gave his genius wing. It remained his deepest poetic experience and the happiest memory of his dying past, with its "rosy floods of twilight's sky"; its latest recollections, after many years, gave, in "Don Juan," the loveliest scenes of all his verse; and he was conscious of the debt: —

"Ave Maria! blessëd be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth, so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint, dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer."

Byron in later years himself once wrote to Moore in a moment of discouragement that his poetical feelings began and ended with Eastern countries, and that having exhausted the subject, he could make nothing of any other. Certain it is that this year of adventurous travel unlocked the sources of his poetic power.

The sudden burst of his genius under these favoring circumstances is, as you know, one of the wonders of literary fame. He had made three very simple prime discoveries. The first was of the romance of the Orient; and his rendering of it in his tales is still its chief example in our literature. Moore, who cultivated the same field, was in this as in other things only Byron's satellite; and both he and Southey and the others who added the Arabian or Persian glamour to their works were mainly indebted to dictionaries, commentators, and travelers, whereas Byron took it from its native soil. However melodrama may enter into his tales, it would be an error not to recognize their realism, not only in

their magnificent nature-coloring, but also in their manners, the accoutrement of their scenes, the play of their passions — and especially in their truth to the sentiment of the land —

> "The land where the cypress and myrtle
> Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime."

Byron's genius, in a certain sense, was low-flying; he never liked to be far from matter of fact; and in that "bodiless creation" that the more ethereal, spiritualizing poets delight in, he was without faculty. He was little gifted with the power of invention, and beneath his verse is often found the substratum of the prose of others. Even in these tales there is paraphrasing of Mrs. Radcliffe's novel, "The Bravo," for example; just as in his drama "Werner" there is another English novel, and in "The Island" and in the shipwreck of "Don Juan" there are versions of old voyages. Byron required that the scene should be given to him, a basis of matter of fact — realism. It was his good fortune that, in assimilating the Orient, realism was given to him in a romantic form and on that superb landscape background, of which the description of the sunset over the Morea, seen from Acrocorinth, is perhaps the most familiar example. This coloring belongs to the characters as well, who are charged with passion and bravery; and the whole is in keeping with that tradition of violent adventure and sudden turns of fortune, which is the historic legend of the Mediterranean in the Moslem centuries. The tales, in fact, are nearer to the temper of Southern literature, long familiar with the Saracen and the Turk, than to our own. Their realism cannot but seem exotic in English, but to the traveler they recall the country of their

origin with the vividness of memory. For Byron's fame this discovery of the Levant was not unlike what the discovery of the Highlands had been for Scott — a new world where fact itself was romance.

The second discovery of Byron was the sentiment of history in the landscape. It began in his classical devotion. He had been bred in school and college on Greek, and had that enthusiasm for the ancient past that was one of the great and fruitful traits of the old education. He had translated from many a Greek poet with schoolboy fervor. This voyage vivified his boyhood studies. Nothing is more genuine in his life than the emotion with which the actual presence of the sacred places of the old Greek land filled him.

"Oh, thou Parnassus! whom I now survey,
Not in the frenzy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty! . . .

Oft have I dreamed of Thee! whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore:
And now I view thee, 'tis, alas, with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.
When I recount thy worshipers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on Thee!"

It was on the next day after composing these stanzas that he saw on Parnassus the flight of twelve eagles that he took as a happy omen of his poetic fame. The mood of these lines, the mere fact of this incident, testify to the sincerity of his feeling. It warmed his description

of Greece, and gave that heroic blast to the lines with which again and again he strives to rouse the sleeping land. It was a feeling, moreover, destined to a rich development, and at last made him the characteristic type of the brooder over the buried past — the poet of the desolation of human greatness. Here, again, the solid base of history, the natural cling of his mind to realism, to matter of fact, is noticeable. Under this mood of history poetry becomes meditative, in a deep sense, and broods upon human fate in its final issues; there grows up that feeling which Tennyson called "the passion of the past," and it interprets itself and finds expression as an elegy of the nations. Byron became the great poet of this mood; it was born of his contact with the Mediterranean shores, and it took its touch of nobility especially from the classic stir of his emotions in Greece.

The third discovery in this year of travel was his practical enthusiasm for political liberty; or, if it be hardly just to ascribe to one group of circumstances the revolutionary force that played so great a part in his fame and was so deeply rooted in his nature, yet it was the actual sight of the servitude of Greece that precipitated and condensed and gave practical direction to his ardor. Every line of his enthusiasm for the Greece of old goes coupled with a rousing cry to free the land; and great lines they are in which he strikes this tocsin of liberty, none more famous: —

> "Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not
> Who would be free themselves must strike the blow!"

Indignation with the present sloth and ignominy is in constant struggle with his memory of the past and

his feeling of virtue in the soil and of the beauty of the scene: —

"Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honeyed wealth Hymettus yields;
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The free-born wanderer of thy mountain-air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

"Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon;
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon."

The very name of the old battle-field is a reproach. It is in these stanzas, and others like them, that there is the prophecy of Missolonghi.

These three elements of the verse, the romance of the Orient, the sentiment of the past in the place of its decay, the call to arms against the Turk, are Mediterranean moods. Every traveler still recognizes them as dominant in his own experience — the picturesqueness, the desolation of old time, the hope. The sense of desolation is the most universal and profound, and in five lines Byron gave it expression that is true not of one place but on the thousands of miles of those lonely and half-savage coasts:

"Look on this spot — a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods whose shrines no longer burn.
Even gods must yield — religions take their turn;
'Twas Jove's; 'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds."

Every traveler knows the mood, and there at least is apt to find it just. Outside of the circle of these three earlier motives, romance, meditation on the past, enfranchisement, the nobler genius of Byron, even in after years, hardly moved; nor did it rise to its height in other than Mediterranean air, except on the field of Waterloo and in the mountains of Switzerland.

In his works he gave the first motive, romance, its most memorable expression in the loves of Juan and Haidée in scenes of unrivalled beauty — the highest reach of the romance of passion in English verse; the second motive, meditation, he developed most impressively and eloquently in the last book of "Childe Harold," making Italy his theme, in an elegy of genius and empire that is nowhere equalled; the third, freedom, found its climax not in poetry but in his death for Greece.

There is yet another element that sprang and strengthened in this year of travel, and is inextricably blended with the other three — his initiation into the love of nature. Byron was not, as I have already said, a true rover; he was not only not a Camoens — he was not even a Burton or a Borrow. He never again repeated this excursion, but was content to live within the pale of civilization. He was aristocratically bred, and necessarily a social person; in the fine stanzas on solitude, you remember, he found true solitude, not in nature but in crowds, that is, in the sense of isolation, and this marks

him as essentially a social person; but once in his life he had approached the mood of the rover, and he describes the precise moment when he —

"felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu;
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to view;
His breast was armed 'gainst fate, his wants were few;
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet;
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast and welcomed summer's heat."

It is the picture of a young man with a horse, the mood of Kinglake, for example, in "Eothen." But in this adventure he first touched hands with nature, and found by experience the bracing and reposing power that nature exercises on the social and aristocratic man bred in cities — he found the relief which nature affords as a foil to life. He escaped from the conventional and entangling sphere of society, and reached unbounded freedom in the open. The scene appealed to him also as a poet; the extraordinary beauty of it, the majestic mountain ranges round the long purple gulfs, the mere clarity of the heavens were a revelation to his senses, and educated them, and through them entered into his spirit. There was also an idiosyncrasy in his temperament, something grandiose in the man's soul which the greater scenes of nature developed and defined more consciously and gave a run of feeling; such scenes roused the physical electricity of his body, and made him sympathetic with the Alpine storm, the glacier peak, and the ocean gale. This deep power of nature so to stir him, and to exhaust itself in mere feeling, first fell on him with full

seizure in the solitudes of the Greek coasts. It grew with his growth, but it was then dissociated from this early adventure and experience of the wild and the foreign. It became a power of pure sentiment. "To me," he says, "high mountains are a feeling." It was a more physical feeling than is found in his contemporaries; he did not idealize and transform and mythologize nature, like Shelley, or become pantheistic or religious in his thought of it or awe of it, like Wordsworth; among nature-poets — and he is one of the greatest of nature-poets — he remains in the dimly conscious and uninterpreted mood of men who in the presence of nature only see and feel. It was true of him in this early time, —

> "Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
> Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;
> Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
> He had the passion and the power to roam;
> The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
> Were unto him companionship; they spake
> A mutual language."

But after this first youthful year "the passion and the power to roam" was a figment of his ideal self, though he retained the secret of that "mutual language," and wherever he found himself in his later little journeys from Geneva to Venice, from Ravenna to Pisa, he used this key.

It is apparent from what has been already brought forward that Byron unfolded his genius characteristically through phases of sentiment, romantically colored, of which the various elements show themselves clearly in the first-fruits of his Mediterranean experience — the fourfold sentiment for the Levant, for the elegy of

history, for the hopes of the Greeks, for the more majestic phenomena and the elemental force of nature. As he matured, he developed another sentiment, which was destined to swallow up all these, and, as it were, to fatten upon them, and to become the memory of him that most deeply stamps his personality in the minds of men. I can only call it the sentiment of self. He was an egotist, as most of the poets have been; egotism is the secret of their strength as it is of the strength of all masters of the world, except, indeed, the few spiritually minded who dare to throw their lives away. He built up, as years went on, an ideal self; the analysis of its formation would be an interesting psychological study, for it was framed from many sources. It is but slightly to be discerned in the early cantos of "Childe Harold." It hardly became fixed in his own mind until after the troubles which led to his second and final flight from England into that self-exile which lasted till his death. He was one of those men who have something theatrical in their nature; he loved the center of the stage; he liked effect. The circumstances of his life made it easy for him to hold attention; and also to adopt into his character an element of mystery, of which he knew the stage value; and he favored by his air and conduct the public disposition to create in the background of his career something melodramatic; he let it be believed that in his own Mediterranean experience there had been the color of "The Corsair" and of "Lara," and that in the type of his heroes there was something of himself in masquerade. It is in the third canto of "Childe Harold" that he unmasked frankly to the public the ideal self as it had come to be at the moment of his departure from England — the ideal of the blighted life: —

> "The very knowedge that he lived in vain,
> That all was over on this side the tomb."

This is the well-known refrain that through a hundred variations makes "Childe Harold" not only an elegy of nations but a personal lament of the individual life. It does not appear to me that the burden of "Childe Harold" is disillusion; it is, on the contrary, disappointment;

> "We wither from our youth, we gasp away:
> Sick — sick — unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst — "

in lines like these the mood is of the futility of life, which is as strongly felt in a thwarted ambition as in a vanished ideal. Byron's melancholy is not that of the betrayed idealist, it seems to me, but rather of the thwarted realist; life had denied to him his will.

Power has always been the quality most immediately recognized in Byron — "the greatest force that has appeared in our literature," says Arnold, you remember, "since Shakespeare"; and every reader feels "the fiery fount" in him, that Dionysaic dæmonic force, which is the core of poetic energy. He had the unquenchable thirst for life that belongs to the poets; desires and ambitions filled him; but in the first maturity of manhood, just before he was thirty, there fell on him the certainty that he was balked, that his passion and power of life was an irony of fate, and for him only the curse of being. It is not necessary to inquire into the causes of this; the fact was so; and against this fact he revolted with a reaction of tremendous energy. It so happened that the country of his birth, England, served her poet mainly as a foil that brought out the most violent aspects of this revolt. England, in his mind, was the incarnation of

that which had defrauded him. In turn he struck back. In his religious dramas he attacked orthodoxy, and in "Don Juan" he attacked morality, as the English understood those terms; he shocked England, and still shocks her, by the blasphemy and licentiousness, as it is there described, of his verse. It was his literary revenge on his country.

He still strove for the poetic laurel; he had literary ambition to a strong degree, and his historical dramas are rooted in this ambition, the fruits of it, and are little successful, for the soil of mere ambition is not deep enough for poetry. His productiveneess was great and rapid; he showed his energy in this trait, and created, as it were, by main force a drama in a month, a poem in a day. In nearly all the same strain is constant, and the despair or contempt of life is the motive that yields alike the most sincere and the most cynical verse, and makes the ground tone of the whole. It is, however, impossible not to feel that Byron's suffering was real, that in him something noble was frustrated, and that the ideal self, on which he concentrated all his power of sentiment with an extraordinary faculty of self-pity and of self-exaltation, had genuine elements. In the last canto of "Childe Harold" he blends his own melancholy — that of the individual life — with the melancholy of the fate of human grandeur in a flow of noble eloquence and personal passion, gathering breadth and majesty under the shadow of Rome, until he pours it like a mighty river into the sea in that last magnificent apostrophe on the shores of the Mediterranean. "Childe Harold," which gave forth the first fountains of his genius, taken in its whole course, is its life-stream; it is his most noble work, and contains all his personal ascendency in the figure of

Harold, and the most powerful elements of his genius in its brooding over the life of man and of mankind — the fate of passion in life and of glory in time. Its only rival in his fame is "Manfred," where he gave dramatic form to this same ideal self, and condensed its story in a brief and tragic play. This form is more somber and composed, and seems more personal, more actual in its ideal self-portraiture; but this is due to its simpler definition and intense concentration. What "Childe Harold" is diffusely and elegiacally, "Manfred" is intensely and dramatically — the ideal summary of Byron.

It was this ideal summary that in the next age became Byronism, and filled the European youth with its moods; nor should there be anything strange in this; for Byronism, despite all seeming, is the mood of strength. It contains the two halves of youthful life at the full — its intense ardors and its profound discouragements. The melancholy of Byron is the shadow cast by his power; he lamented life because he loved it so much. It is true that for men of English blood, what seems melodramatic and sentimental and the weakness of personal complaint interferes with the appreciation of his verse; but, as I said at the beginning, Byron is not characteristically an English poet, but a poet of the Southern lands, of the Mediterranean, where he found his inspiration and his themes, and in whose neighborhood he passed his life during the composition of his works; and to men of Romance blood, and also to the German and the Slav, melodrama and sentiment and the psychology of passion are quite a different thing from what they are in the British climate and the Anglo-Saxon temperament. The surprise and novelty of these things to Englishmen was indeed one of the causes of their immediate success

in London when they were still fresh. Byron's rendering of the history and the scenes of passion is the sign royal of his poetic genius. He was, in this as in all other ways, a realist, and he presented the theme with a vividness of emotion, a rush of eloquence, and a dramatic tic sense of incident and of catastrophe, that make them still the best tales in poetry in our literature, as they originally drove Scott, his only rival in the game, out of the field. It was natural that with the maturing of years, and amid his own private unhappiness, he should show the darker side of the history of passion; and no poet has so painted its pains and its despairs, as in the Rousseau stanzas and many others; it is natural, too, that such an expression, so violent, so warm, so personal, so self-revealing, should be more sympathetically received by the nations of Southern temperament, who are to the manner born, and in whose lives passion plays like blood, and to whose own experience these lines give form and meaning. Passion, the poet's gift, was Byron's endowment and experience both, and in his latest work he still drew its scenes with truth and charm beyond all others, with delight in them, even when the sequel was cynicism. It is by the variety and the fire of his renderings of real scenes of passion, and by the psychological analysis of it as an element in the wretchedness and futility of life, that he entered most intimately into the hearts of all those youths whom he so stirred upon the Continent. It was to them a part of his strength. It was as a type of strength and not of weakness that they saw him. He was to them a Promethean figure, Titanic in energy, suffering the woes of life, and warring on the gods of the old régime, the incarnation of splendid and passionate revolt against life itself. His poetry had

with them the double fortune that it had in himself; it blended with their private lives on the pathetic side and with their public hopes in their revolutionary energy. For, if he was the victim of passion, he was also the apostle of liberty; no voice rang like his through Europe in the cause of freedom, and in his death he was its martyr.

If there is one thing that is borne in on the sympathetic reader of his life, it is that the man lacked a career — some channel for the passion and power of life in him to pour through, some cause to serve, some deed to do. In personality he reminds one of that Renaissance type, masterful, not subject to any law, reckless; and, in his later years, he seems near to the decadence, like an Italian nobleman of the degeneracy, disoccupied with life and more selfishly cynical with each revolving year. It was from this state that he roused himself to make that last effort in the cause of Greece which restored to him the robe of honor that was slipping from his shoulders. It was from one point of view a kind of suicide of genius — the act of a man who finds nothing left but to die with honor. In seeking it, nevertheless, he recalls to us the generous qualities that were in his youth, of which the type is the Boy in the antique oratory. There was a spirit of nobility in the man's soul in early years, as his school friendships show; and though dimmed, it was never lost. He was good metal. He had power; he had passion; and the charter of greatness was his. He had come to wreck, in his own eyes; and to ours he seems like a noble vessel chafing to pieces on the sluggish reef of time. He would end it. He remembered his youth — when he had sat on Sunium's marble steep and dreamed that Greece might yet be free. He went back to those

Adriatic shores, to the Leucadian seas, where he had coasted in the dawn of his fame, to the height of snowy Parnassus over the long purple gulf that had so stirred him, and there in its shadow, in his last stanza, he said adieu to life: —

"Seek out — less often sought than found —
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest."

V

GRAY

I HAVE thought it appropriate to select one example of the poetic temperament, not from the "bards sublime," but from those more quiet sons of the Muse whom we call minor poets; for, though their works be in low relief, yet, if the theory is sound, they should show in their degree the traits of the grand style, as we find the same supreme Greek art even on broken vases and utensils of daily life. Certainly no one would dream of describing Gray as "mad"; the word "passion" is grotesquely inapplicable to him; and even such a phrase as "the power of life" seems dubiously to be used of his lethargic nature. He was a mild and gentle scholar, who lived in the lazy air of a university, slow in all his physique, intellectually self-indulgent, procrastinating, an invalid with invalid habits of conduct, a dilettante, a letter-writer. His entire routine of life afflicts us with a sense of dulness and heaviness, an English atmosphere of dampness and ennui, which inclines us at once to commiseration. He wrote very little — so marvelously little that he is, in literary history, the typical instance of unproductiveness, of sterility. The Dionysiac fire was very somnolent, to say the least, in his case. Vesuvius, however, is not always in violent eruption, and those who look on it for the most part see the mighty mountain with only a thin wisp of smoke lazily drifting

upon the pale, high air; sometimes there is not even that.

In comparison with such poets as we have considered, Gray's verse is such a wisp of smoke. Yet it is fair to remember — what is oftenest forgotten — that great literature is not a constant product of this planet, that many nations have none of it to speak of, and that in favored nations it is the rarest of all their products. On the whole, poetic energy, if it has the violence and splendor of volcanic fire, has also its general repose-fulness. In the intervals of activity men are content with the phenomena which show the continued, though torpid, existence of the great life-principle; and the wisp of smoke is, after all, curling placidly up from the old forges within. It behooves us, especially, to be modest, for our magnificent America has never yet produced a poet even of the rank of Gray. Moreover, there is a singular circumstance in Gray's case: slight as his product was, it has had an immense fame and vogue among men. His work resembles one of those single anonymous poems of the world which have achieved fame all by themselves, unaided and alone. Little poetry has been so widely read, so familiarized in households, as the "Elegy." It has also been highly appreciated. No poem has had a finer compliment paid it than was contained in the old story of Wolfe's reciting it to his officers in the darkness of the river as he drifted down to his heroic death, and declaring that to write it was more glorious than a victory. The "Elegy," it is true, is somewhat exceptional; but the best of Gray's work has had equal immortality, and still goes wherever the English language makes its way. No one reads Marlowe now except students in libraries and poets by profession;

and the voice of Byron grows rare and distant — his vogue evaporates; but Gray's verse still has the shining of the adamant of time upon its lines, and seems as untouched with two centuries as Mimnermus and Theognis with twenty. Gray is among the poets who die only with the language that they breathed.

Gray did not greatly strive for fame. Perhaps there was some obstruction in his nature or his circumstances; perhaps he did not greatly care. There was, at least, no struggle in him, no restless necessity for expression, no stress of thought or of feeling. He was, as a mortal, very ordinary; and as a man of culture, very humane. He led the stillest of bachelor lives in college chambers. If he had deliberately excluded emotion from his life, he could hardly have better succeeded. Of course he was often bored, and often lazy — that is, not unemployed, but with a scholar's laziness. He took but little interest in contemporary politics or war, and found rather amusement than any cause for excitement in the spectacle of what men do. The passage in which he describes Pitt's speech, on proposing a monument for Wolfe, is typical and a melancholy comment on the admiration of Wolfe for the writer. "Pitt's second speech," he says, "was a studied and puerile declamation on funeral honors. In the course of it he wiped his eyes with one handkerchief, and Beckford, who seconded him, cried, too, and wiped with two handkerchiefs at once, which was very moving." That is typical of the way in which he looked on human affairs. They were no great matter — Gray was a gentleman. He moved freely in the world of high life, and liked to talk of men of rank over the sweet wine he drank after his mutton. The passions of nations, the swing of ideas, the fortunes

of battle, were no more to him than club topics would be to-day, news and conversation, but not exciting. He read Rousseau, he says, but "heavily, heavily" ; that is, he was bored. He had his well-bred circle of friends, very polite, and his well-bred private tastes, very cultivated; but he was unmoved, habitually otiose, lethargic, oppressed with the dulness of things very often, yet not, I think, unhappy; indeed, a certain intellectual gaiety, even in describing his own dulness, is a part of the charm of his private correspondence. There was much nonchalant good breeding in him, especially as he grew up and came into the routine of manhood; he was a man of the world, not in the sense of being merely a man of society, but in the sense of being disengaged, disinterested, the impartial spectator with a light touch, a just judgment, and a tone of elegance.

In his youth he appears more amiable, though there was in him then all the promise of the type he became. He made, you remember, with three other friends at college a league of friendship known as the quadruple alliance. Walpole was one member of the set; and his friendship with Walpole characterizes the eighteenth-century tone of the social half of his nature. A second member was West, who died young and with griefs of the mind as well as with ills of the body, and who left a charming memory of himself, both in his verses and in his affection for Gray, with whom he is associated as the true youthful comrade; and this friendship with West, in which there is an unusual high-bred demeanor considering the youth of the two, characterizes the other half of Gray's nature, the more kindly and natural half, not more intimate, but intimate with more equality; with Walpole one thinks of Gray's social history, with West one thinks of his personal charm.

This private side of character he exhibited, it would seem, in his college residence during his mature life to younger men who were students there. The tribute that one of these young men paid to him, shortly after his death, breathes the pure spirit of such a happy relation. The passage is familiar, but can hardly be spared. The young man is writing to his mother.

"You know that I considered Mr. Gray as a second parent, that I thought only of him, built all my happiness on him, talked of him forever, wished him with me whenever I partook of any pleasure, and flew to him for refuge whenever I felt any uneasiness. To whom now shall I talk of all I have seen here? Who will teach me to read, to think, to feel? I protest to you that whatever I did or thought had a reference to him. If I met with any chagrins, I comforted myself that I had a treasure at home; if all the world had despised and hated me, I should have thought myself perfectly recompensed in his friendship. There remains only one loss more; if I lose you, I am left alone in the world. At present I feel that I have lost half myself."

Another instance of the cordiality with which he welcomed youth, at least when it appealed to him at all, is his remark on the Swiss Bonstettin, who so uselessly tried to make Gray talk of his own poetry and personal affairs. "I never saw such a boy," says Gray; "our breed is not made on this model."

A life, so untouched with worldly unrest, so withdrawn in happy privacies of companionship and of gentle tastes, so breathing the air of delightful studies, lying wrapt and somber in our minds between the churchyard repose and the collegiate hush, is almost monastic in its effect.

Yet the impression needs to be relieved by other traits. Gray, for example, was a traveler, and at times he escaped from this seclusion of himself, for if the mind does not change with travel, it at least moves under different lights. He made the journey through France, when he was young, with Walpole, and went into Italy as far as Naples. Whether he derived it from this excursion or not, he had a liking for travel — I dare not call it a passion — but it was perhaps such an enthusiasm as his veins were capable of. It is said that he had mapped out every picturesque journey in England, and in the middle of the eighteenth century picturesque journeys in England for an elegant gentleman like Mr. Gray were really proofs of enterprise. He was early hardened to travel on the road and had knowledge of inns, and in these journeys was his slight taste of adventure — all he had. Just before he died he seemed to feel that his only hope lay in travel. The fact of his saying so shows how much travel had meant to him in his life. The notes he made of his Italian travel, for example, exhibit the quality of his mind with great clearness. He was mentally vastly curious; his intellectual curiosity was unbounded, and shows primarily in him the mind of the scholar; not the mind of the thinker at all — for he seldom generalizes — but that of the scholar, the collector of knowledge; for knowledge may be collected like snuff-boxes or fossils, and the scholar's learning is not infrequently a sort of museum. Such a museum was Gray's mind. On his Italian journey one sees him in the act of collecting it with youthful enthusiasm. He catalogues the pictures and marbles, and describes and comments briefly upon them; he maps the cities, the squares and buildings, the river and the road, and the

ruins beside the way. In Naples, especially, one is struck by the thoroughness with which he explored the ancient district to the west of the city, the diversity of interests he found there, the fulness, minuteness, and variety of his account, compressed though it is, and above all by the interest he took in it. His open and cordial spirit toward foreign things — not a frequent trait in first travels — is extraordinary. He was plainly a careful traveler, laborious and fruitful in observation, storing up multitudes of facts. This, which is so plainly seen in the Italian notes, is characteristic of his mind in all its accumulations.

He was a connoisseur of the fine arts, not merely in the major arts, painting, sculpture, and architecture, but in prints, antiquities, gardening. He applied himself to natural sciences in several fields, like Goethe, and made the best account of English insects up to that time. He was profound, for his age, in history, and commanded foreign history in its own languages. He was as fond of reading travels as of traveling, and interested himself in geography; he investigated heraldry. He was expert in the literature of the art of cooking. He understood music. He was an excellent scholar in Greek, then a rare accomplishment, and very thorough in his pursuit of it, where he had some of the qualities of a pioneer. Clearly, he had a wonderfully acquisitive mind for facts, and also a singular capacity for the development of esthetic tastes of diverse kinds. He was a man of comprehensive faculty and consequently of erudition.

His information, however, retained the general character of the note-book and the handbook; it was miscellaneous, but exact and detailed. For such collections as have been described a great deal of industry was re-

quired, though it was an industry that might seem to Gray often a waste of time and a kind of laziness; in details one often seems bewilderingly idle, at the best, and Gray's mind worked by details. In the midst of such occupations which are in themselves the leisure of a college life, he sometimes found time to write, or to cancel, a line of his poetry, to file a phrase or meditate an epithet, and from one nine years to another to publish a poem. There was no hurry, no need; he never wrote for the public, nor for money; he made verses as a man of taste, just as he collected butterflies or prints, for his own pleasure.

There is no psychological problem, no temperamental puzzle in Gray. The inquiry why he wrote so little, which seems to be the main concern of his critics, is futile. Ill health, low spirits, dissipation of mind on a multitude of pursuits and interests are alleged as one reason; but great poets have been so afflicted without losing their voice. That he fell on an age of prose is also brought forward to account for the fact; but his own mind was not at all prosaic; even the pursuit of science could not make it so. He did not choose, did not care to write very much. What he did write he wished to be perfect — just as every letter of his manuscript is carefully made, even in his loosest notes. He had no great range in the world of poetry. He was interested in neither strong emotions nor great ideas. In religion being, as he said, no great wit, he believed in a God; and he left the matter there. He was never emotionally stirred by any great experience beyond that bereavement which is the common human heritage. All his life was at a low temperature, and the reasons of his infertility seem less circumstantial than constitutional.

The classicism, in which he was intellectually bred, suggested and gave body and form to his development. He was chiefly a moralist; in substance of the Latin tradition, using the Roman mode of abstract imagination and bringing forward those contemporary eighteenth-century figures of Fear, or Madness, or Adversity, which together make a kind of philosophical and bodiless mythology in which man's psychical fortunes are externalized like phantoms — bloodless and weak creatures that are to true mythology what the shade of Achilles in Hades was to the glorious earthly manhood of the hero. The treatment, however, was far better than the substance, for he employed for this the original Greek method of idyllic art. He was characterized, as I have said, by interest in detail. In his art it is the same. He was a connoisseur in words, and thought that poetry has a diction of its own, more select than the language of common life, and he was careful to employ this colored and somewhat exquisite language, word by word. He built the line out of the words, and the line rather than the phrase is his unit of style. He filed each line, and composed the stanza, and of the stanzas the completed poem. At each step he took a short view; to have the fit word, the well-molded line, the stanza, the poem. In all this process he worked by the method of detail; it is what we sometimes call in verse jeweler's work, or miniature work. The latter phrase is the most suggestive, for it indicates that the poem is made up of successive pictures, linked together in a larger composition, or else simply left to succeed each other in a pleasing order. This is the classical idyllic method of verse, which he learned at first hand from the Greek, but in the English use of which he was instructed by Milton in

such a poem as "L'Allegro" and its companion piece. The method is most familiar to us in Tennyson's "Palace of Art" or "Lady of Shalott."

Gray was not so finished an artist as Milton or Tennyson, and one reason of this is, I think, because he was more directly and exclusively dependent on his taste in the fine arts. It is true that he had natural taste, and knew that poetry is good only when born in the open, or must be written, in Arnold's phrase, with the eye on the object. It is not a very adequate phrase, for it suggests realistic rather than imaginative treatment. Gray's eye was certainly not on any object when he wrote: —

> "Now the golden Morn aloft
> Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
> With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
> She wooes the tardy Spring; "

but one feels in these lines the reminiscence of painting — the "vermeil cheek" is the glowing of the color softened as he had seen it on canvas and not on any ruddy English maiden. The whole passage is fresco painting; and so, it seems to me, as I read on, I see a painted landscape: —

> "Yesterday the sullen year
> Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
> Mute was the music of the air,
> The herd stood drooping by."

This is a natural scene, but it is carefully composed, the atmosphere of the snow-squall first, and the herd in the foreground. Farther on, the poem becomes frankly pictorial, using the painter's art as a metaphor and not to form a picture: —

"The hues of bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe,
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life."

The method of this poem is obviously that of painting in these passages.

It appears to me also that he uses composition — I mean the grouping of figures — very often to give such life as is possible to those dreary figures of the family of sorrow, and make them pleasing; unless he does so, he leaves the present generation at least with a very dissatisfied sense of beholding merely allegoric images little alluring in themselves. I mean such composition as this: —

"Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

So, too, the same holds of the numerous dances, rings, and bevies to be found in his verse, all of which seem to me like reminiscences of wall-painting. His imagination was internally controlled by the art of painting, even when most natural; it is not merely in the occasional coloring and composition, such as I have instanced, but especially in his habitual careful use of perspective. In nearly every poem examples may be found of this peculiar sensitiveness to distance, and he seldom fails to give either horizon or centering to the view. The first stanza of the Eton Ode gives an easy example of such a prospect, complete in background, in foreground: —

"Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores

Her Henry's holy shade;
And ye that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights the expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way."

Generally, however, it is by a brief stroke that the effect, the idyllic picture, is given. He was especially fond of the sight of a distant march on the mountain-side. Here are some instances which need only to be read — this of the sunrise: —

"Night and all her sickly dews,
Her specters wan, and birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky:
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts
of war."

Or this: —

"Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array."

Or this very simple but perfect scene: —

"Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by."

And that other eagle —

"Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air."

Or for a near scene, and one illustrating Gray's love of wild majesty in nature: —

Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!"

Or, again, the well-known image of the progress of poetry: —

"Now the rich stream of Music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign;
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar."

The same poem yields another of those large-motioned scenes on the wide prospect: —

"Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed and long-resounding pace."

Examination will show, I think, the predominance in Gray's imagination of scenes thus guided by his eye for coloring, composition, and perspective in the painter's rather than the poet's way. He uses perspective metaphorically where, for example, in the laughter of the morning on the sea the whirlwind "expects his evening prey," and again, just below, where

"Long years of havoc urge their destined course;"

and we find it, curiously enough, transformed both to the sense of hearing and the realm of metaphor: —

"And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire."

Observe, too, how in the opening of the "Elegy" the landscape is thus built up, with the horizon, the half-distance, and the foreground: —

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

"Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign; "

and the eye is brought to rest thus on the dark churchyard, with its shadowy trees and obscure hillocks and hollows of the turf.

Gray, then, was a poet, in the main a moralist, using an imaginative method to inlay the moral sentiment of the verse with miniatures, in the Greek idyllic mode, but miniatures which have in them the scope of fresco and canvas by virtue of his use of color, composition, and perspective, for which he was indebted to the fine art of painting, by whose means he interpreted nature and also realized allegory. The scope of his interest as a moralist was narrow and commonplace, and hardly exceeded the ordinary English view of life as a scene of misery of which the last act is the burial service. He relieves on his vision of spring, you remember, the figure of the convalescent invalid as the climax of happiness in that season; he sees the Eton schoolboys on a background of the actualities of life suggesting rather the hospital and the jail than a battle-ground; he leads all seasons and fortunes up to the inevitable hour and converges

the paths of glory to the grave. It is a familiar English view, and was familiar to our fathers at least. He is not lacking in other powers, in satirical and light, almost gay, verse, as in the story of the cat and the goldfish, where he paints the fate of lovely woman. It is not a cheerful fate, though cheerfully described. Nor is there anything cheerful in Gray, except the alleviations of our misery by the rosy hours of morning, the fragrance breathing from the ground, and the bliss of ignorance in school days. The characteristic of Gray is a somber view, in which brilliant artistic colors are inlaid by an imaginative rendering of history and nature. His artistic faculty distinguishes him in his commonplace morality; but as a leader in a new world, with the passion and power to bring it into being, he seems to have no place, nor was there in his life the fermentation of any profound experience.

He does present, nevertheless, certain faint signs of the characteristics of poetic genius. For one thing, his verse was an innovation. Excepting the "Elegy," which, as he truly said, succeeded by its subject and would have succeeded had it been prose, his verse was a puzzle to his contemporaries and its acceptance was slow; it was long before men selected him as without question the chief poet of his generation, and longer before they knew that his works were a classic of his language. Yet he originated nothing; his originality lay only in the fact that, being sincere and having a sound critical faculty of high order, he was true to the great tradition of poetry which had been lost in England, and by his respect for Shakespeare and Milton and for the ancient classics he was enabled to cultivate the qualities of imagination, melody, and nature which are essential to poetry. He

was saved from his century by his taste. He was, however, so exceptional in this that his practice had the force of originality, being an innovation, and he to this extent suffered the initial contempt that a poet often receives in his own age. But he was an innovator, a pioneer in more important ways. It is obvious in his learned tastes that he was not only in advance of his age, but in advance along the whole line. His study of both science and history foreknew the great career of both these branches in the next century. He was an archeologist, too, in the kingdom of which many of us now live. And besides these broad premonitions of the age to come, he had the clarity of genius in three specific particulars in his own art.

The first of these prophetic traits was his devotion to Greek. It is true that in this he was the heir of Milton and the humanists, but he went forward well into the paths of our quite different modern scholarship. Three times in the last century English poetry has been dipped in Castaly all over, and risen radiant from the bath: in the person of Shelley and his comrades, in that of Tennyson, and in that of Swinburne. Gray was the premonition of this, and a forerunner as was none of his contemporaries. Secondly, he was a discoverer of the romance of primitive literature. He was made enthusiastic by Ossian, and valued that verse much as did men upon the Continent. He was attracted by Gaelic, and the monument of this is that Welsh ode from which I have read, which is poetically his greatest work, with touches of the sublime in both its mood and language — a great English ode. In obeying this taste he showed that glimmer of the romantic dawn, then far away, which brought with it the romance of the Highlands and the Sagas, the

old Saxon poetry, the Song of Roland, and all the early literature of the romance tongue, and which now includes the ingathering from all primitive peoples. Thirdly, he was a lover of wild and majestic scenery, and of the picturesque beauty of the English land, a landscape lover, and even in his prose notes later poets have found ore for their own golden lines. In this he foreran the poetry of nature, which became so large an element in the romantic age. He did not philosophize nature, nor etherealize it, nor idealize it; but he saw it and responded. In comparison with the great nature-poets, such as Wordsworth and Byron, his rendering of nature is slight indeed; it is, perhaps, no more than the brightening of our willow stems in the clear east winds of morning hours, but it is a sign of spring. In these three ways, each a main direction of development, Gray was a sharer in that quality of genius by which it is symptomatic of the future, sentient of it, and an exponent of it before the fact.

But, though we may trace these ties of consanguinity with the great poets and find a few drops of the royal blood in Gray, yet if we are true to our own impression and speak justly, I think that neither passion nor prescience of change are much in our minds when we read his verse. It is true that his poetry displays more passion than that of his contemporaries, in its lyric fulness and sweep; but, after all, it is a reminiscence and not an inspiration, it is stylistic passion, a passion for the roll and fall of words, a passion of rhetoric, and it is an echo, besides, given back by his classical tastes. He likes to show the tone and compass of his instrument, and the instrument is the lyre. At his best he is remembering Pindar; and as in that picture I read of the Theban

eagle, he seems to be rather drawing on paper the evolutions of the bird than taking flight himself.

Our main feeling after reading him is that he is classic. No other English poet gives the feeling in so pure a form; as if, except for the coloring of time, he might have written these pieces, that seem relics and fragments, being so few, in some far-off century in Ionia. One critic, Professor Tovey, the best it seems to me of Gray, says, very appositely, "that poetry is the most securely immortal which has gained nothing and can lose nothing by the vicissitudes of sentiment and opinion." That is a mark of the classic, and Gray bears it. To rise outside of the circle of change is hardly given to mortals, but one mode of approaching such a state is to live in commonplace. Gray was a contemplative moralist, and his thought is commonplace; but if he had a passion for anything, it was for perfection, for finish, in the way of expression; and by virtue of this instinct, which never slept in him, he dignified and adorned the commonplace English view of life. He, moreover, was somber; and he chose for his theme the most solemn point of view in life, the resting place after death. He was very sincere in this; you will find, from early days, in his letters to his friends the idea that men are at their best, that the soul is in its best earthly estate, in the times of their bereavement. He certainly believed this, and his poetry is indebted to this profound belief. The "Elegy" is a universal poem, because its material is so commonplace that it might, as he suggested, have been written in prose, but it is dignified and adorned, perfected in expression till it seems as inevitable in every word as the "inevitable hour" itself. This artistic handling of the theme is what the poet in Gray added to the

phraser of commonplaces; the combination works the miracle that such a gentleman as Gray was, such a remote scholar as he was, should turn out to be the poet of ordinary people. Gray, as I said, was very humane; in essentials an ordinary human nature deepened into poetry by a grave tenderness of feeling and expressing himself with a pure clarity of thought. Though a classic, he does not belong with the great poets. His work reminds me most often of the minor craftsmanship of the Greek artisans, who made of common clay for common use the images and funeral urns; such seems to me the material of his poems; but in form how perfect they are, both for grace and dignity, and they are adorned, like the Greek vases, with designs, little pictures, imitated from and echoing the greater arts. If the poetic fire in them be rather a warmth than a flame, yet they are lovely receptacles of its half-extinct ashes.

VI

TASSO

THE poetic temperament is consanguineous in all the poets, and hence in passing from one to another one is always noticing some sign of kinship. Tasso reminds us of certain traits of both Gray and Byron; the classical scholarship of the one and the Mediterranean quality of the other ally them to the Italian, and the melancholy which in one was an elegy of the churchyard and in the other an elegy of nations, becomes in Tasso an elegy of life itself; moreover, there was in Tasso's personality an irritable self-consciousness that recalls Byron's egoistical sensitiveness. In another way Tasso so exceeded Gray in power, and Byron in charm, that he seems out of their class; and he has always been in men's memories so signal an example of the misfortune that attends the poets as to seem almost solitary in his miseries.

He was by his nature exposed to every acute feeling; and his education was such as to increase his peril, and make his sorrow sure. He was the son of a distinguished poet, of noble family, and born at Sorrento; his memory still haunts the place, but his residence there was brief, and his life is associated rather with the north of Italy, whence his family came from a town near Venice. Still a child, he was separated from his mother, his father being in trouble and a wanderer, and he never saw her afterward; it is probable that she was poisoned. He joined his father, and was educated at the court of Urbino,

and the Universities of Padua and Bologna. He was an extraordinarily precocious child, and while still at Sorrento had been given into the hands of the Jesuit fathers, who impressed upon him that religiousness which so deeply marked him and was the cause of much of his suffering. He took his first communion at the age of nine; he recited original verses and speeches at the age of ten; and while yet but eighteen, he published a considerable poem, "Rinaldo," which immediately gave him great reputation in Italy, and determined his career.

He entered the service of the Duke of Ferrara, with whose name his biography is most closely joined. His life is obscure with mysteries that time has not cleared away. He was a favorite of the Duke; yet in the height of his fame, the Duke put him in prison and kept him there for over seven years, in spite of protests and petitions from princes and prelates and other persons of importance. It was long supposed that the reason was Tasso's devotion to the Duke's sister, who was his friend and the lady of his sonnets. The weight of opinion now is that, whatever concurring causes there may have been, Tasso's own condition and conduct gave sufficient excuse for restraint. He had within him the germs of insanity, and with every year they seem to have shown more violent manifestation. He was full of suspicion and resentments, and repeatedly had left his patron suddenly and gone to others, only to return again; he had hallucinations also; and, as time went on, he saw and conversed with spirits; sometimes it was his worldly or literary affairs, sometimes his religious fears that were the motives and subjects of this mental disturbance; the Duke said that he kept Tasso confined in order to cure

him. He was allowed full liberty of correspondence, and was seen by friends and visitors. Montaigne so saw him — the poet being asleep apparently and shown by his jailer. Tasso's letters are full of details and terrible complaints; but how much of what he wrote may he not have fancied? The facts are insoluble. Some ascribe his madness to his love, some to his religious education. At all events the care of the insane was then but a poor sort of medicine, and prisons in those days were places of negligence, filth, and sickness. If only a small part of what Tasso relates of his confinement is true, it is enough to justify the pity that he has always received. It is singular, if there were no other reason for the Duke's conduct than the poet's mental state, that he should so obstinately have refused to let him go into the care of other princes and courts who were anxious to receive and aid him. At last he was released; and after that time he lived mainly at Naples and Rome, where he died at the age of fifty years, just before he was to be publicly crowned with laurel in the Capitol.

It does not appear that, except for a few outbursts of violence, his insanity was such as to interfere with the usual action of his intellectual powers as a scholar and a poet; the higher faculties were left untouched, while his sense of fact was subject to delusion. His young friend, Manso, was a witness of a conversation at Naples between Tasso and the spirit with whom he talked; both voices, says Manso, were Tasso's, though he did not seem aware of it. Such was Tasso's madness — an over-excitement of genius; in consequence he passed much of his life in prison or in wanderings from city to city in Italy, often with much hardship, but oftener treated with kindness and great honor, except that at Ferrara

the fact of his fame and his favor in the earlier years exposed him to the jealous persecution natural to a small court. He was a man very masculine in appearance, uncommonly tall, broad-shouldered, grave in demeanor, of the blond type, with blue eyes, well-exercised in the use of arms. He stammered, and seldom laughed, and was slow in talk. But this portrait from his last years, and the pale sunken cheeks and worn look, which are also mentioned, belong rather to the victim of life than to the young poet who wrote the great Italian epic, "Jerusalem Delivered."

Tasso was a voluminous writer. His works fill thirty-three large volumes; but his fame is comprised within the limits of this epic, and of another small pastoral drama, "Aminta," which is related to his genius somewhat as "Hero and Leander" is to Marlowe. Apart from the brutal miseries of his life, the true and unavoidable tragedy of it lay in a conflict which took place within his own nature. He was a poet with the qualities of one; but his temperament was developed in a double way. On the one hand it was an artistic nature grounded in scholarship, not unlike Gray in that respect; on the other hand it was a religious nature grounded in the asceticism and exaltation of the Jesuit training of his precocious childhood. The two natures were contradictory; and in the lifelong struggle between them, reflected in his literary work, the religious nature finally triumphed. In his last years he rewrote his epic, and left out its charm in obedience to his conscience; but fortunately the original version was already in the hands of the world, and the later one is now completely forgotten.

He had chosen his subject and sketched out parts, at

least, of the poem before he was twenty years old; and as he composed, he labored over the verse, and refined and revised it, with great care. It was the period known as the Catholic Reaction, during which the Church crushed the Reformation in Italy and withered the Renaissance there, and thus prepared for Italy the centuries of her servitude from which she has arisen only in our day. Tasso was acutely anxious that his poem should be in harmony with Catholic truth and pious feeling, and he submitted it to ecclesiastical criticism; the worry of his mind over the trouble that thus arose was, it must be thought, one grave cause of his malady; but though he modified the verse, he did not then entirely destroy what he loved so much, its poetic beauty. He had chosen a Christian theme, the recovery of Christ's sepulchre by the crusading knights, and he would treat it worthily, with seriousness and piety; but nevertheless the poetic art was a tradition, and he was bound, as a scholar with the tastes and principles of the Renaissance, to obey the tradition of Homer and Virgil no less than he was obliged as a faithful son of the Church to listen respectfully to the views of Puritan Cardinals. He must write a classic epic; and the poem is, in fact, not only classical in its general conduct and method, but in detail echoes the "Iliad" and the "Æneid" much as Milton echoes the Bible, and a reader familiar with the classics takes the same pleasure in these echoes that a reader familiar with the Bible takes in the words and imagery of "Paradise Lost."

The epic, however, when it came into Tasso's hands, had added something to the classic tradition, and had changed it in important particulars; especially two things had been brought prominently forward, namely, magic,

and the interest of love. The presence of these two new elements in their degree of development made of the epic so different a thing, that a new name was coined to describe it, and it was called a romantic epic in opposition to the older style. Tasso's theme was an admirable epic subject; it was noble in itself, and one in which the powers of heaven and hell, whose participation was thought necessary in epic verse, could appropriately be introduced; the combatants on both sides were worthy champions, so that the martial interest could be well maintained; and the subject was made Italian and brought home to the present hour by the link that bound the poem to the House of Este, at Ferrara. In fact, the entire ground of the poem was near to the contemporary age, in the point that the Mohammedan power was still a dreaded foe and held the Mediterranean, so that the feeling of hostility was acute, and, besides, the physical aspect of the Saracen East was well known; Italy and Christendom still faced that way. The taking of Jerusalem was a more contemporary topic than we are apt to think, and the poem appealed to a living fear and hatred; thus, though not a national poem, it had some of the qualities of one, and it stirred a martial ardor not wholly extinct.

The martial interest is in the foreground, and is developed in the verse to the greatest degree possible. The course of the war is deployed with skill, so as to open an ever wider field of operation and to increase steadily in importance and interest till it culminates in the fall of the city. In detail every kind of warfare is depicted — the single combat by challenge, the personal encounters by accident, the mêlée of the armies and the individual fight in its midst, the night attack, the siege,

the assault — every variety of battle, even to the cutting off and total destruction of a corps marching to the assistance of the Christians under a Danish chief, which may perhaps be exemplified for us by such an action as the Indian massacre of Custer's command. Tasso's descriptions of these scenes are admirable for spirit and variety of detail, and I find his military operations less tedious than those of most epics. In the contrast of the two civilizations he is also successful, and he renders the opposition of creed and manners, the barbaric and the pagan to the civilized and the Christian, with vividness and yet not so as to degrade the enemy. In the characterization, again, on both sides he is excellent, and he gives much distinctness even to the minor persons, which is unusual in epics, while the heroes are vigorously and diversely drawn. The main heroes are, of course, removed from the field early in the action by one device and another in order to give the others their opportunity to act, while the greater characters themselves come in to make the climax of interest and valor toward the end. All this is in the ancient classical manner, like the "Æneid" and "Iliad." So is the bringing in of the supernatural powers, the angels on one side and the devils on the other, corresponding to the partisanship of the gods in the old epics; but here Tasso suffers from the powerful rivalry of Milton. Tasso's devils are merely medieval monsters, and his angels have little to do. His imagination would in any case have been checked in its free action by Catholic scruples.

The place of the old gods of Olympus is, however, really taken by the romantic element of magic, in obedience to which indeed the devils also act; and it is not in the court of Heaven, but in the witch, Armida, that the

counterpart of Juno's hatred for the Trojans is to be found. Magic had been popularized in poetry, especially by Ariosto, and Tasso followed here this master and the popular taste. Perhaps to us the poem is much enfeebled thereby and loses reality; it seems so to me, at least; it becomes almost a fable, Arabian. On the other hand, magic as an artistic device frees the fancy of Tasso and makes him the master of surprise. It is here that he begins to be himself, and to write with his own unaided hand; but it is in the second element that he derived from the romantic epic — the element of love — that he is the master and comes to his own. If he treats of battle in all its phases, it is from a sense of duty, in part; but he depicts love in its various forms because it is his pleasure. War he learned from other men's books, and mastered by imagination; but in love he was lessoned only by his own heart, and in the story he gave out experience. It is the more singular because he was not of an amorous nature, but was rather indulgent to ascetic feelings. His imagination was warm, and it is rather the sentiment than the passion of love that he depicts; and he always blends it with nobleness of nature. Dante's line — "love is but one thing with the gentle heart" — might be the formula of all these varied scenes.

In the second canto he introduces one such episode, and one that was so cherished by him that he refused to cut it out at the bidding of the ecclesiastics who advised him. It is the story of the Christian maid, Sophronia, who is drawn almost like a nun, and who to save her people confesses to an act that had incensed the tyrant ruler of Jerusalem; she stands at the stake to be burned, when her lover, Olindo, who had not dared to show his love, recognizes her, and at once confesses to the same

act; it is plain that both are guiltless, but both are condemned to burn at the same stake. As the flames approach, he tells her his love as being about to die. The execution, however, is stayed in a natural way, and the two are released to a life together. Such a happy issue is rare, nevertheless, in Tasso. It was believed that in Sophronia he drew the figure of his lady, Leonora, the Duke's sister, and in Olindo the veiled love he bore her; and thus in this fable pleaded his own cause.

In the other great instances of his portraiture of love the persons are the leading characters of the poem, and not introduced merely episodically. He drew three types. Tancred, the chief Christian hero after Rinaldo, is in love with the Saracen warrior-maid, Clorinda; in his passion he is the typical knight of chivalry. Thus he fell in love with her at first sight, and her face at any time makes him oblivious to all else, even the call of honor in battle; she, being an Amazon and a pagan, is entirely indifferent to him; it is only at the last moment and by a miracle that, when being vizored they fight and he kills her, in the act of dying she asks him for baptism and is reconciled. She afterwards appears to him in a dream and confesses her love. Tancred is also the hero of the second type, Erminia, a Saracen princess whom he had rescued and treated with great kindness and who fell in love with his gentleness and nobleness. She was no warrior, but a tender woman to whom love gave courage, and she stole away from Jerusalem by night in the armor of Clorinda, to go to the Christian camp and heal him when he was wounded, for she understood the art of healing; but she was frightened on the way and fled to some shepherds, with whom she remains until near the end of the story, when she returns to care

for him after Clorinda's death. The third type is the love of the witch, Armida, for Rinaldo; she enchains this youth, the Achilles of the poem, meaning to destroy him, but is overcome by her love for him, and transports him to her garden in the Atlantic Ocean, whence he is rescued by holy aid and recalled to the war. He leaves her, and she follows, seeking revenge, but still in love, and attends the pagan army; in the final defeat she is saved by Rinaldo, and desires to become a Christian through her love for him.

These three poetic types of womanhood, the tragic type in Clorinda, the pathetic type in Erminia, and the romantic type in Armida, give a wide compass to Tasso in the interpretation of the passion. In each case love overcomes, equally master over magic, over the coldness of the Amazon, and over woman's simple heart; in all love is victorious. The two knights also yield to love; but the passion is represented rather in the women than the men, and hence the poem is most famous for these three types of womanhood rather than for its heroic figures, and more for love than for war. In Spenser's "Faerie Queene," you remember, in the same way the female characters excel the knights in interest. Tasso is thus peculiarly the poet of love; excellent as he is in the martial and truly epic part of his task, it is in the romantic part and in the passion, that is rather lyrical than epic, that he is a supreme and unequaled master. It is natural to find that the traits which most attract his readers are those that depend on the predominance of love in the verse.

It is characteristic of the poem that its atmosphere counts for more than its substance; the power of fascination is in the atmosphere; and, in fact, the substance

itself tends to pass into, to evaporate into, mere atmosphere. This is an important point. You will observe in reading it, for example, how large a part the landscape plays in giving tone to the most charming scenes. It is, of course, Italian landscape that is used, though the scene is Palestine. It is, moreover, selected Italian landscape — seashore, glens, quiet places in the hills; and, besides, this landscape is brightened and adorned, in the manner of painting or of stage illusion. One recalls especially the moonlight scenes, such as that where the light touching the armor of Erminia betrays her on her flight — or the pastoral scenes, such as the remote spot where she found refuge with the shepherd boys; and again the garden scenes, especially those of Armida's island, which gave to Spenser his Bower of Bliss and to Milton his Eden.

It has been noticed that light rather than color characterizes the poem; it is filled with light and chiaroscuro, but not with hues; in fact, it seems to me that the place of color is, as it were, taken by sound. It is true that the poem has a landscape setting, characteristically Italian, quiet, reposeful, of ideal beauty; but it has also another setting in the sense of hearing, which is constantly appealed to, as if music in the strict sense were an element of the scene. It is not merely that the birds are always there, but sound in many forms breathes in various concords. A brief example is the charm that greets Rinaldo in the enchanted wood —

> "a sound
> Sweet as the airs of Paradise upsprings;
> Hoarse roars the shallow brook; the leaves around,
> Sigh to the fluttering of the light wind's wings;
> Her ravishing sweet dirge the cygnet sings,

Loud mourn the answering nightingales; sad shells,
Flutes, human voices tuned to golden strings,
And the loud surging organ's glorious swells," —

all these make up a hidden orchestra heard in one. And again, a little farther on, it rises:

"Impearled with manna was each fresh leaf nigh:
Honey and golden gums the rude trunks weep;
Again is heard that strange wild harmony
Of songs and sorrows, plaintive, mild and deep;
But the sweet choirs that still such tenor keep
With the swans, winds and waves, no ear can trace
To their concealed abode in shade or steep;
Nor harp, nor horn, nor form of human face,
Look where he would, was seen in all the shady place."

Such a hidden harmony and secret accompaniment go through the poem, and sphere it in music as the landscape spheres it in visible beauty. It is as if various belts, like Saturn's rings, were wound about the poem and shed colored light upon it.

The Italian is a subtle genius, and Tasso excels in subtlety. It is a thing difficult to describe, but more even than by landscape and music the poem is enveloped in emotionalism, of which perhaps the constant appeal to pathos is the most obvious form. A simple detached instance is the death of the Soldan's page, in the ninth canto, slain in battle where like a child he was playing at war. Every artifice is used to enhance the mere pity of his savage death. Pathos, however, pervades the poem. Emotionalism is still more intensely present in the tragic and pathetic and romantic treatment of love directly in the three types already mentioned. It has been pointed out that the characteristic phrase of Tasso is that by which he so often expresses his failure to

express himself — that is, his sense of the inexpressible — the phrase *non so che,* "I know not what." So he describes the last words of Clorinda when she asked baptism of Tancred, who had killed her —

> "Like dying lyres heard far at close of day,
> Sounding I know not what in the soothed ear
> Of sweetest sadness — the faint words made way."

Tasso thus habitually at the highest moment of feeling takes refuge in the mystery of the unexpressed.

It is evident that such qualities as these, beauty of such a type, such a use of music, such pathos, sorrow, and yearning of life, cannot but impart weakness to a martial epic poem, as such, and diffuse through it a relaxation of the heroic quality. The character of the heroes is enfeebled in many ways — in Tancred and Rinaldo by the love element and in Godfrey, the leader, by his prudence; it is rather among the Saracens and in the minor Christian knights that the heroic quality is most purely preserved, the simple martial manhood of the enterprise; but, in proportion as the inward life enters into the characterization, as the psychology becomes interesting, the epic power is diminished.

This is equivalent to saying that in the characteristic part of his poem Tasso obeys a lyrical impulse. The emotion to which he is most sensitive is not martial, but tender; the things he loves are not the things of war, but of charm; and more and more, as his true mood grows upon him, he emerges in the region of mere beauty and delight, and sings, not the epic of action, but the lyric of feeling. Once, indeed, in the climax of the garden of Armida, the highest point of the mood is frankly given in a song. With all his epical dexterity,

Tasso is primarily lyrical by genius, and his love of landscape, music, and the emotional disburdening of his spirit are forms of his lyricism. Beauty, grace, kindness, gentleness, nobility, are the things he loved and responded to, and rather with a lament than with a pean. For the scene of life is presented with vigor in the action, it is true, by an intellectual *tour de force* in description, of which he had learned the art from books such as Homer; but the scene of life is also and more markedly represented with great melancholy in the thought and after-issue of the action, with unceasing and irrepressible sadness. The history of love in the poem is nowhere a happy history, and Tasso pleaded this fact in his strife with the ecclesiastics who disapproved of these scenes. The whole field of life here represented is one of sorrow and death — the woes of men; but the great test of the militant spirit of life — delight in victory — is strangely absent. There is no joy of victory anywhere in the poem. Though Jerusalem falls, and the knights enter in triumph, this seems a very unimportant incident at the end, and merely winds up the poem. The poem is really done, when we know the fate of the lovers in it.

So far from victory felt in the poem, it is the sense of the difficulty of life, of the thwarting of life, of its sad fates — the sense, in a word, of the unaccomplished — that most remains with the reader. The feeling of the inexpressible — the *non so che* of his favorite phrase — is one with the feeling of the unattained. Tasso's view of life thus ends not in action, but in an attitude toward life, a certain cast of thought and habit of emotion. It is not merely that action is not the true subject and interest of the poem; but rather emotion divorced from

action, pure emotion; mere feeling in its own realm is the characteristic trait and charm of this verse; and therein lies Tasso's original genius as distinct from all that he inherited from the old masters. He was an extremely sensitive poet, with an excitable imagination cultivated in its exercise by the most highly developed artistic tradition, not only in poetry but in all the arts; but from his precocious adolescence to the close of his career, he was brought in contact with real life only in the sphere of the sentiments, and for the most part only in the region of an ideal love for the Lady Leonora. His touch on life had been almost exclusively through the imagination, and his pleasures and sorrows had been in that realm, in a true sense. No wonder he became visionary even to the point of mental disease, that is, of hallucination; but in the sphere outside of hallucination his ordinary daily life was still imaginative. It was natural that there should grow up in such a genius a prepossession for emotional states little related to action, a love for emotion just for its own sake, as if it were the effect of a drug.

The point of culture he marks lies, thus, in emotionalism toward beauty and joy, sensuously felt through their charm, but becoming an end in itself for the sake of the emotion only. This is the secret of his love of music, for it is in music that emotion is most freely experienced in this pure form disjoined from action. In his poetry art is seen on the way to music, and his lyrical passion is the intermediate stage. It is historically plain, because his pastoral drama "Aminta," in which these qualities I have dwelt on are shown free from any epic entanglement, was the beginning of pastoral drama in Italy — that is, it ushered in Italian opera. Tasso, by

virtue of this possession of his genius by emotion for its own sake, is the forerunner and prophet of the age of music soon to dawn after him, and in the coming of which he assisted.

You will observe that Tasso exemplifies with singular precision the main principles that were laid down with respect to the general nature of poetic energy. Though he was a scholar from boyhood and steeped in the academic learning of his time, and master of the earlier tradition of literature ancient and modern, and was so expert with his mind that he could, like Pope, compose in his teens a work seemingly mature and excellent enough to make him at once, like Byron, and younger than Byron, the best poet of his time, nevertheless, it was not by this weight and compass of learning nor by anything intellectual that his genius succeeded; but it was by his power of emotion. Emotion is found to be, in a singularly pure form, the substance of his epic, its center of interest, its core from which its power radiates. Secondly, though by the traits of his epic, its classical and romantic handling, its relation to luxury and the arts, its piety, and much else both in structure and detail, he belongs to the Renaissance, and the great emotional upheaval due to that rebirth of the soul and senses of man, and is in fact the last child of that age in his own land, and hence is to be counted in that group, nevertheless, he is also a forward-looking man, and announces the new and approaching age of music. In the most intimate and personal part of his genius he deals with emotion as it is under the condition of music, and attempts in poetry the characteristic effects of music, endeavoring to realize emotion for its own sake. He is thus in his genius prescient of the change of the mood

in the race, and attaches himself to a modern time by the link of the opera and by the use of his imagination, specially in the highly artificial forms of the pastoral and of magic; that is, he frees himself as much as possible from realism in the scene, and disengages emotion from actuality in the manner of the opera. It is unfortunate for his fame that he thus stood, as it were, between two arts, poetry and music. Among epic poets, he professed to fear only Camoens, of his contemporaries; his inferiority to the greatest, such as Homer and Virgil, is obvious, and in majesty he falls short compared with Milton; he cannot be ranked among the greatest poets in epic verse. The reason appears to be that in his martial verse he follows a literary tradition and is at best doing by main force what others had done; while in his emotional verse he is experimenting in a kind of art which reaches perfection rather in music than in poetry. He was too late for martial epic; he was too early for musical emotion; but his genius foreknows the moods of music. Thirdly, his genius is greatest and most efficient in proportion as it is unconscious of itself in its art. That part of his work which was intellectually and consciously determined was the martial part, the structure of the action and placing of the episodes, the imitations of his predecessors — all, in brief, that he derived from the classical and romantic tradition, from books. If he had done only this, he would have written only a respectable poem, like a hundred others, which would have soon been forgotten or listed only in the history of his country's literature. What he added out of his own heart — the poetry of love ensphered in landscape, melody, pathos, sentiment, sensuousness — and seized most intimately and passionately in the form of an

inexpressible longing without issue — all this was the flowering of the unconscious, the original part of him — that which was least indebted for subject or method to other men and former poets. The primacy of emotion, the prescience of the future, the guiding and prevailing power of the unconscious element in his genius are clearly seen.

The characteristic marks are just as plainly to be seen in his personal temperament and worldly fortunes. A precocious boy, he had extraordinary sensitiveness and extraordinary creative faculty, and under the excitement of a fevered and unhappy life his senses blended with his creative faculty and made him a visionary — the victim of his faculties. He was a courtier and a scholar, and both are careers naturally subject to annoying jealousies, to envy and detraction and intrigue; he had no power of wise conduct in unhappy circumstances, and his long and miserable imprisonment in the flower of his manhood was the result; yet in his life he was much honored and befriended in general; his fame, which he highly valued, was always a solace to him. Looking beneath the obvious facts, however, it appears to me that one reads an old and familiar tragedy of life. He was from birth a man framed for the natural enjoyment of life, and especially for its esthetic enjoyment; he was a man to whom beauty and delight appealed in the most noble, sweet, and penetrating way, and his original sensitiveness was developed to the full by high cultivation. Two barriers, nevertheless, rose between him and life. He loved a princess, not of his own world, and consequently he was filled with that ideal passion which is the tradition of Italian poetry and which is full of sentiment, of unrealized emotion. Secondly, he was trained

by the Jesuit fathers, in charge of his boyhood, to an ascetic habit and view, and to a fear of displeasing heaven; and, as time went on, this element in him, which always fought with his poetic impulses and power, made him cancel the best of his verse. In these two ways his natural enjoyment of life was blocked. He responded to the call of life with his senses and imagination; we read his true nature, in this way, by the charm of the things he loved. Yet, under the conditions, it is not strange that the main impression left by his poetry is that here is written the despair of a heart in love with life. It is this despair that gives such poignancy to his pathos, such melancholy to the verse, and such yearning force to his lyrical cry of the beauty, the joy, and the extinction of life.

VII

LUCRETIUS

Last year, in my wanderings through Sicily, I came to the old town that was once Acragas, and I had the happiness to abide there quietly for a while, where so long ago between the sea and the mountains stood what Pindar called "the most beautiful city of mortals." I remember I would go down to the ruins, where, in the midst of immense broken columns, lay on the ground a great stone figure of a Titan, with his face looking to the broad, empty blue sky; and it seemed to me like an unwritten poem of Victor Hugo, as if the Titan in a sort of triumph lay there on his back in the center of the fallen temple of Zeus, his foe and oppressor, and looked up with a stony, sardonic satisfaction into the now throneless ether. It was a Mediterranean mood. And often, wandering about through the region, I remembered that sage of antiquity, who is to us hardly more than a sounding name, Empedocles — about whom you may recall Arnold wrote a poem "Empedocles on Etna" — who was for all time the chief glory of Acragas. He was a poet and priest, a man of science and affairs; even — as he said — powerful in magic, almost with divine power, so excelling both to himself and the citizens seemed his faculty. He occupied himself with great works of public utility, using novel means; he opened a path for the north wind through the hills in order to shield the city from the heats of summer; he turned the bed of a

river, and poured it through a vast marsh and so drove the pestilence away forever; he raised a woman from seeming death by his medicinal art; and it is little wonder, in those days, that when he came forth, being a noble of the state, tall, clad in purple robes and with long streaming hair, and walking in golden sandals, attended by his retinue of followers, the people saluted him with such reverence as is akin to religious awe; such honor, let us say, as was paid to holy men in medieval cities. Often I thought of him, and wondered how it could have been — so impossible and remote seemed the picture in the denuded plain; and I remembered the words of Lucretius, whose enthusiasm for great minds is one of his engaging qualities, in which he laid his laurel on the memory of Empedocles, whose genius was kindred to his own: —

"Him within the three-cornered shores of its lands that island bore, about which the Ionian sea flows in large cranklings, and splashes up brine from its green waves. Here the sea racing in its straitened firth, divides by its waters the shores of Italia's lands from the other's coasts; here is wasteful Charybdis, and here the rumblings of Etna. . . . Now, though this great country is seen to deserve in many ways the wonder of mankind and is held to be well worth visiting, rich in all good things, guarded by large force of men, yet seems it to have held within it nothing more glorious than this man."

With the same lonely grandeur that Empedocles bore to Lucretius, with the same solitary preëminence, Lucretius stands forth to my eyes from Roman time, which "seems to have held within it nothing more glorious than this man." I may not be able to carry you along with

me in this enthusiasm; for the subject is difficult, the matter of his poem is hard and dry, unintelligible indeed to a modern reader without special preparation to understand it; and yet, though time has thus petrified large portions of it, the poem burns with a far deeper vigor than flows in the poets whose fiery genius I have hitherto tried to interpret to you. It is the passion not of the blood, but of the mind; not for a nation's glory like Camoens, but for the welfare of man's race; not issuing in despair like Byron and Tasso, but in the control of life. It is the intellectual passion to serve mankind in the ways of knowledge.

Just as poetic genius is often a double star — as Shakespeare was both poet and dramatist, and as Plato was both poet and philosopher, and the poetic element was primary in both of them — so Lucretius was a poet and a man of science, and the poetic element was primary in him. The subject matter of his work is science, a theory of physics, explanations of natural phenomena, astromony — that is, the science of the ancient world. For the most part, as science, it is in matters of detail now merely curious reading, useful in reminding us that science as well as religion has a history of early fables and a past littered with errors; but that is all. Personally, I find something refreshing in coming in contact with this childhood of science, just as one finds it in those passages of Plato where he treats incidentally of similar subjects; and it makes for intellectual modesty, when one comes upon these provinces of ignorance in the serious works of the great, for even in our own culture may there not be just such childhood tracts, as they will seem hereafter? But a better reason why the old sages of Greece, like Empedocles, interest me is that

there I feel myself, more clearly than elsewhere, at the very birth of that Greek reason, in whose advent lay, as it seems to me — I do not say eternal salvation — but the salvation of our race here on earth. I like to read such passages of these old poems as express man's first sense, not of the difficulty of virtue, but of the quite as important difficulty of knowledge. It sometimes seems to us that the early Greek sages were overweening — indeed the very types of omniscient self-conceit; but this is partly because of the universality of their theories, and partly it is the after-effect of Socrates' sarcasm upon our minds. Hear what Empedocles said, four centuries before Lucretius: —

"Weak and narrow are the powers implanted in the limbs of men; many the woes that fall on them and blunt the edge of thought; short is the measure of the life in death through which they toil; then are they borne away, like smoke they vanish into air, and what they dream they know is but the little each hath stumbled on, in wandering about the world. Yet boast they all that they have learned the whole — vain fools! for what *that* is no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, nor can it be conceived by mind of man. Thou, then, since thou hast fallen to this place, shalt know no more than human wisdom may attain."

Lucretius, however, is little embarrassed by any doubts of the amount and kind of his knowledge; and as one reads his explanation of specific natural phenomena, given out with such assurance, one is reminded of that tone of knowingness still familiar to us in the eager and plausible scientist. But to leave on one side this detail, which is as compact of error as the lives of the saints, there are certain conceptions and ideas of a more favor-

able and just notion of Lucretius' true attainment in a scientific grasp of the world. These ideas are simple and few; but to estimate them justly it must be remembered on what a background they are relieved, how recent was any natural knowledge, how close was the world of primitive mind, how small that world was, how near the gods were in it, scarce a hand-breadth off — how Lucretius himself lived in a Mediterranean world seething with idolatries; it is against the barbarian inheritance of paganism, against its Egyptian mysticism, its magical practices, its long-consecrated ceremonial rites — in a word, against the pagan attitude to nature that these ideas stand forth; and in them slowly forming was the creation of a new world, the world of thought in which we now live.

In the first place, in room of that small Olympian or Nilotic world where the gods were near, he conceived of infinite space, thronged with systems of worlds, universes like our own. It is hard for us to think rightly of the sequent steps of man's progress, to realize, for example, the epoch-making change of such a thing as the discovery of the ways to work metals, or of cultivation of the olive and of corn, or of the alphabet. Now we think of the epoch of the expansion of the mind as being coincident, say, with the substitution of Copernican for Ptolemaic astronomy; but when the idea of infinite space was first intelligently conceived so that the man knew what he was thinking, that was the moment of expansion to which all others are dwindling points; that was a sublime moment in the history of man's mind, though since such knowledge was not so readily transmissible as a material discovery, like the culture of corn, the effects of the act are more slowly apparent. The

thought of infinity was old when Lucretius received it; but it must not be considered that the infinity of the universe was the same to him as to us. He believed, for example, that the sun and moon and stars actually are of the size that they appear to us to be; and he filled space with systems conceived on that pattern. Nevertheless, he had acquired for his thought a scale of infinity; and it gave to his conception of things a sublimity not unlike that which the same scale gives Milton in "Paradise Lost."

Secondly, he conceived of nature as an energy existing in this infinite, and infinite itself; and in the analysis of energy he found the other pole of thought, the infinitesimal, the atomic; for all matter is composed of the atoms, infinite in number, and themselves imperceptible to the senses. In other words, he conceived of nature, on modern lines, as an unseen energy — the unseen universe, as we sometimes call it — the microscopic, the molecular, the ethereal wave of force, however constituted, which is invisible, but out of which in combination the visible world of nature emerges to our gross senses. The world of nature was thus to him, essentially, a world of the mind's eye; the veil of sense had fallen, and he saw what was behind. This theory he derived, as he did all his knowledge, from the Greeks, those few lonely thinkers who were the light of that early world. The idea itself, however, was a great achievement of thought, and one of the most fruitful legacies that the antique world transmitted to us.

Thirdly, he conceived of energy as organized; the atoms were different in kind, and limited in the number of kinds, and by their combination formed various species of things, as we may call them, and these species were

fixed, so that a certain combination produced one species only, and if that species had in itself the power of reproduction, it reproduced only its own species. Everything thus, he said, has "its limit and deepset boundary mark." This clearly is nature organized. Fourthly, he conceived of energy as a flux, an element of change, an incessant action and transformation of the atomic groups dissolving and recombining, which is the process of nature. Fifthly, he conceived of energy as perfectly conserved in this process; there is neither loss nor addition; the sum remains always constant. Sixthly, he conceived of energy as absolutely law-abiding, subject neither to interference nor caprice nor default, unchangeable in its certainty. It is, perhaps, by the strength with which he grasped this idea of the invariable order of natural law that he most affects the admiration of modern times, partly because of the intensity of feeling with which he clings to it; it is the anchor of his faith. To sum it up, Lucretius conceived nature as an unseen, organizing, ceaselessly active, perfectly conserved, and law-abiding energy, working in infinite space and itself infinite. This is not unlike the scientific idea that we know.

To turn to the history of the universe, it appeared to Lucretius that in the ceaseless action of infinite atoms in infinite space sooner or later there would arise the particular combination from which the world phenomena known to man followed. He did not believe that the world was very old, and he thought the history of man quite recent. There is in his physical theory a rude doctrine of evolution, of the centering of the sun and moon and the solidifying of the earth; and man arising out of nature, with other species of things, was half-beast, savage and rough and pitiable, and was gradually by his own

efforts civilized. He notices the extinction of species in the conflict for life, and he assigns to the softening influence of children a great share in raising man from the savage and brutal state. Some of you may remember that John Fiske was believed to have added an original contribution to the doctrine of evolution by the influence he assigned to the prolongation of the period of infancy. It is a curious parallel. But it is enough to say that in his theory of the origin of civilization, language, the arts, and all that concerns the primitive history of mankind, Lucretius is quite in harmony with modern thought, even to the analysis of the influence of dreams in generating some important human conceptions with regard to the soul. As he thought that the life of mankind and of our universe had not been long, he also believed that the world had grown, even in that time, old, and was losing its strength; his mind was prepossessed with the idea of the dissolution of things as the natural term of all combinations of atoms, and it is a curious sign of the sense of insecurity then belonging to the human mind to find him thinking that the world as we know it would end in a catastrophe, which he apparently anticipated as likely to occur at any moment, when the frame of things should fall in and the atomic storm fly dispersed abroad. Such in brief is the view of the world which Lucretius presents.

It is not, however, the science of Lucretius that interests me; it is incidental to my main purpose, which is rather to set forth the poet. Yet it was science which gave to Lucretius the ample career of his mind. He was excited and enfranchised by it, and in these ideas he seemed to have received, as it were, the freedom of the universe, to go fearless and unquestioned where he would,

as he describes his master, Epicurus, who, he says, "traversed throughout in mind and spirit the immeasurable universe, whence he returns a conqueror to tell us what can, what cannot come into being — on what principle each thing has its powers defined, its deep-set boundary mark." Lucretius had reached in these conceptions the seats of the wise, which he describes in a famous passage: —

"It is sweet, when on the great sea the winds trouble its waters, to behold from land another's deep distress; not that it is a pleasure and delight that any should be afflicted, but because it is sweet to see from what evils you are yourself exempt. It is sweet also to look upon the mighty struggles of war arrayed along the plains without sharing yourself in the danger. But nothing is more welcome than to hold the lofty and serene positions well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down upon others and see them wandering all abroad and going astray in their search for the path of life, see the contest among them of intellect, the rivalry of birth, the striving night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power and be masters of the world. O miserable minds of men! O blinded breasts!"

It is from such a height that Lucretius is always seen looking down. For he had about him the horizons and perspectives of a new world. In another famous and peculiarly Roman passage he says: "When mighty legions fill the plain with their rapid movement, raising the pageantry of warfare, the splendor rises up to heaven, and all the land about is bright with the glitter of brass, and beneath from the mighty host of men the sound of their tramp arises, and the mountains, struck by their

shouting, reëcho their voices to the stars of heaven, and the horsemen hurry to and fro on either flank and suddenly charge across the plains, shaking them with their impetuous onset. . . . And yet there is some place in the lofty mountains whence they appear to be all still, and to rest as a bright gleam upon the plains."

This is the new perspective from which Lucretius looks on human life. He was the only Roman who transcended Rome. He sees Rome itself as but one of the swift runners who hand on in turn the torch of life among the nations. He was a Roman, and of an ancient house; but he despised alike imperial power and vastness of wealth. Rome spread material dominion over the earth, but he saw only the dominion of the mind as a thing worthy of man's dignity. Rome subjected men in their bodies, but his passion was to enfranchise the souls of men and bring them to a birth of freedom. For Lucretius was deeply endowed with that social sympathy which belongs to poetry by its own nature, as I have said; and the main motive of his poem was not knowledge, not the scholar's motive, but was service, the poet's function. It was not for science that he deeply cared, but for its effects on the minds of men.

He looked abroad over human life, and he often depicts it in the large; he sees it without a veil and tells it without a lie; there is no golden age in man's past for him — only the bestial misery and blood-stained cruelty of savage life from which man rises with vast effort and suffering; or, he shows, as at the end of the poem, the plague at Athens, a terrible scene of human wretchedness; or, he singles out of the high luxurious life of the age the Roman noble — "driving his horses, he speeds in hot haste to his country house, as if his house were on

fire and he was hurrying to bring assistance. Straightway he begins to yawn, so soon as he has reached his threshold, or sinks heavily into sleep, or even with all haste returns to the city." It is the picture of speeding wealth in our own day. Lucretius renders life as he sees it, in its past and present; and his words are blended of irony, reproof, and sorrow. He had broad and natural sympathies; and his sympathy, though not lacking in individual touches, is nevertheless mainly impersonal and racial; it is for the race rather than the man that he has pity and commiseration. That is why he wrote his poem of which the aim is not scientific but philanthropic. He saw mankind under the yoke of superstition; the critics say that he exaggerated the terrors of the supernatural, which did not so afflict men in paganism. I am not competent to gainsay their opinion, yet my own mind refuses to see the Mediterranean world of those ages other than as he described it — permeated with superstitious fear and barren pagan practices through all its million-peopled coasts; so, at any rate, it seemed to him, and he lifted his hand to wither this immeasurable evil, the chief and fruitful source of men's woes, at the root. It is at superstition, as at the old dragon, that every glittering shaft of reason is shot in these golden lines.

Lucretius identified all religion with superstition, and meant to uproot it from the minds of men and entirely eradicate it. He opposed in sharp contrast the pagan view of the world, under which man and nature were the sport of the gods, and the view of Greek reason in which the divine element in every form was excluded both from nature and human life. The state of man as Lucretius saw it, under paganism, was one of servitude to fear; under this idea of the Greek reason it was one of free-

dom, of dignity, and its worst estate one of noble fortitude and self-respect. He desired to establish this reign of reason, in place of paganism, and to follow in the footsteps of his master, Epicurus, who had opened the way and brought this light into the world. At the outset of his poem he describes this achievement of Epicurus and what it meant for mankind: —

"When human life lay foully prostrate upon earth, crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face and first to withstand her to her face. Him neither story of gods nor thunderbolts nor heaven with threatening roar could quell; they only chafed the more the eager courage of his soul, filling him with desire to be the first to burst the fast bars of nature's portals. Therefore the living force of his soul gained the day; on he passed far beyond the flaming walls of the world and traversed throughout, in mind and spirit, the immeasurable universe. . . . Us his victory brings level with heaven."

It is always a great moment when mankind looks at its gods with level eyes; and, in this case, the gods seemed to Lucretius to vanish and remove far away. He believed that these gods that men worshipped with altars and sacred rites over the whole earth, and honored with festal days, were the coinage of man's brain, and man had placed them in heaven and given them charge of all things: —

"O hapless race of men, when that they charged the gods with such acts, and coupled with them bitter wrath! what groanings did they then beget for themselves, what wounds for us, what tears for our children's children!

No act is it of piety to be often seen with veiled head to turn to a stone and approach every altar and fall prostrate on the ground and spread out the palms before the statues of the gods and sprinkle the altars with much blood of beasts and link vow on vow, but rather to be able to look on all things with a mind of peace."

Nor, says Lucretius, in his opening lines, should any fear that the ground of reason is unholy and her path the path of sin; rather it is religion that is sinful. And he goes on to draw that picture of the human sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon, her father, when the Greek ships crossed to Troy, as a capital instance of the evil to which religion inclines the hearts of men. He puts this picture in the forefront of his poem as a landmark of its thought; it was from such monstrous acts, and the mood which is their parent, that life could be freed; in other words, the capital thought of the poem is that life must purify itself. For Lucretius looked on life as not so much wretched because of external calamity visited upon man, but because of those woes to which his own will consents and in which it is by folly or fear an accomplice; religion in particular was some thing of which man could rid his bosom, since it was born of it. To this end, then, Lucretius strove; it is with passion that he pleads the cause, and it is this passion which underlies the intellectual vigor of the panorama of nature in her acts and scenes which he unfolds, and also the profound moral sympathy with which he displays the human lot under nature's dispensation. It is, therefore, not exposition but persuasion that he has in view, and for this reason he inlays the verse with pictures, in the old way — Gray's way — and puts truth forth as poetry.

His procedure is easily understood. "This terror, then," he says, "and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the rays of the sun and glittering shafts of day, but by the aspect and the law of nature." He excludes the gods from dominion over nature on the ground that the universe is infinite and command of it is beyond their power. Man's conception of the world had outgrown his conception of the gods. "Who can order the infinite mass? who can hold with a guiding hand the mighty reins of immensity?" Lucretius says. And again he excludes intelligence from nature on the ground of the imperfection of the world; it is obviously not the work of intelligence. Intelligence belongs to man alone; it is the accident of his being, and will vanish from the universe with him. We are not concerned with the truth of the statement, but with the fact. What a step it was, what a power it showed in man to change his mind! What a masterly reversal of the point of view this is, in comparison with that universal habit of old time which projected human life into all things and gave the early peoples over to animism, polytheism, and all the subtler forms of anthropomorphic thought as it fades away in philosophy and metaphysics. It is by just such reversals of universal past beliefs that the progress of reason is marked.

All this argument against the gods proceeds, you observe, not on moral but on intellectual grounds; that is, it is a characteristically Greek mode of thought. The citadel of superstition, however, in Lucretius' eyes was rather in the fear of something after death than in the presence of the gods in this life and the world of nature. He met this fear by the simplest mode of attack, and denied the immortality of the soul. It is not necessary

to go into his argument. To me the most remarkable thing about it is not the argument nor the belief itself, but the grave and almost tender considerateness with which Lucretius tries to reconcile men to this belief — it is almost as if he were talking to children, with a gentle but firm insistence, and with entire understanding of their disturbed fears and sympathy with them, but, nevertheless, if they will listen, the fact is not only really so, but best, a blessing, the greatest blessing that can come to heal the wounds of men and give them peace. This lulling tone in the argument always reminds me of the persuasive melody of the verses in the "Faerie Queen," where Despair wooes the knight to self-destruction. In no part of the poem is Lucretius more vividly in sympathy with life in its natural happiness. "Soon," he says, "shall thy home receive thee no more with glad welcome, nor thy true wife, nor thy dear children run to snatch the first kiss, touching thy heart with silent gladness." Nowhere is he more gravely eloquent: "Death, therefore, to us is nothing; . . . and as in time gone by we felt no distress when the Carthaginians from all sides came together to do battle, and all things shaken by war's troublous uproar shuddered and quaked beneath high heaven, and mortal men were in doubt which of the two peoples it should be to whose empire all must fall by sea and land . . . thus when we shall be no more . . . nothing whatever can happen to excite sensation, not if earth shall be mingled with sea, and sea with heaven." Nowhere does he speak with more dignity, like a Roman: "Why not, then, take thy departure like a guest filled with life — and with resignation, thou fool, enter upon untroubled rest?" "Now resign all things unsuited to thy age, and with a good grace up

and greatly go: thou must." "Even worthy Ancus has quitted the light, . . . the son of the Scipios, thunderbolt of war, terror of Carthage, yielded his bones to earth just as if he were the lowest menial. . . . Even Epicurus passed away when his light of life had run its course, he who surpassed in intellect the race of man. . . . Wilt thou then hesitate, and think it a hardship to die? . . . None the less will that everlasting death await you. . . . Thus it is that all no less than thou have before this come to an end, and hereafter will come to an end; . . . and life is granted to none in fee-simple, but to all in usufruct."

Such are some of the passages in which Lucretius, like a patient but high-minded teacher, endeavors to reconcile the minds of men to their good. For in his eyes to escape from the evil, whose bondage is a state of supernatural fear, is to find the door of life itself — the door of that life still possible to men which, he says, though on earth, may be a life "not unworthy of the gods."

For when Lucretius had excluded divine power from the constitution and government of nature — and he goes on to show that all events are merely natural phenomena — and when he had quieted the fear of something after death by denying immortality to the soul, he had, nevertheless, performed only the negative part of his task. He had, besides, to build up an ideal of wise life under such conditions. The view that great poets take of human life is never very rose-colored; and Lucretius is no exception to the rule. The picture that he gives of the child at birth is very famous: "The babe, like a sailor cast ashore by the cruel waves, lies naked on the ground, speechless, in need of every aid

to life, when first nature has cast him forth by great throes from his mother's womb; and he fills the air with his piteous wail, as befits one whose doom it is to pass through so much misery in life." Human nature itself is very imperfect; it is, says Lucretius, like a leaky vessel that will not retain even the blessings that are poured into it, and moreover it vitiates these goods inwardly by a certain taint and nauseous flavor, as it were, proceeding from itself. The discovery of wisdom that could in any way remedy these objects seems to Lucretius a marvelous action: "a god he was," he says, "a god who first found out that plan of life which is now termed wisdom." It was a more divine gift than corn or wine, for life could go on without these; but "a happy life was not possible without a clean breast." The deeds of Hercules were nothing in comparison. "The earth even now abounds in wild beasts and is filled with troublous terror throughout woods and great mountains and deep forests; places which we have it for the most part in our power to shun. But unless the breast is cleared, what battles and dangers must then find their way into us in our own despite! What cares, what fears! — and pride, lust, and wantonness, what disasters they occasion! and luxury and sloth! He therefore who shall have subdued all these and banished them from the mind by words, not arms, shall he not have a just title to be ranked among the gods?" It is a Roman who is thus exalting the victories of peace over those of war, and of reason over arms. He builds then his ideal of a life, content with little, free from lust for political power or riches or pleasures, strong in natural affections and in the reasonable satisfaction of our needs, and with power, if not to escape calamity, at least by fortitude to blunt

the edge of evil. To learn this wisdom is the best use of life in the brief interval that life shall be ours.

Such, in rough outlines, is the teaching of Lucretius. He does not deny the existence of the divine gods; but they live remote from man, like him a part of nature in their own mode of existence, and to be careless of mankind is a part of their blessedness. It would be easy to appear to find in that principle of energy, that vigor which is nature, whose force is in the coming of spring and the gladness of cattle and in the thoughts of men, which is the inspiration of this poem in Lucretius also, as he says — it would be easy to find in this something like a divine principle diffusing itself in life; but it is not so presented by Lucretius. He excluded from life every thought of what is to our minds religion and the immortal soul; and did it as a bringer of intellectual truth in the interest of man's earthly happiness. It is, perhaps, hard for us to realize that he seemed to himself in this a benefactor of his race. Yet, if we remember justly the pagan world, or even if we recall the vast reign of religious superstition over mankind still throughout the world and realize what it is, if we remember how much of superstition still persists even in the purer forms of religion, and to how great evils religion has inclined men's minds in the centuries since Lucretius wrote — if we keep something of all this in our minds, we may better measure the hopes of this early thinker who first seized hold of the truths of science and the dominion of the pure reason over men's minds as if there were in it the coming of a new and happier age.

Lucretius was not so much prescient of that new age as living in it. The sense of being a discoverer in a new land is one of the most vivid traits in his mind. "I

traverse," he says, "the pathless haunts never yet trodden by the foot of man. I love to approach the untasted springs and to quaff, I love to cull fresh flowers and gather for my head a crown from spots whence the Muses have yet veiled the brows of none — because I teach of great things." He has this mark of the poetic faculty — its forward-looking gaze, its atmosphere of the virgin peak and the new-breaking morning. He has also the mark of passion — intense, overwhelming, absorbing — the passion of the intellect for truth and of the heart for service to his race. He has the mark of the social bond, which belongs to genius. He stands, moreover, at that line of fracture in the thoughts of men which does not belong to any one age, like the Renaissance, but is the slowest of the great social changes — the line which marks the rise of reason in the government of man's thoughts. It is only in our own time that Lucretius has been esteemed according to the true measure of his greatness. But what a far-sighted and firm-fixed genius that was which could wait eighteen centuries for its true fame — it seems like one of those great suns of outer space whose light requires such length of years to reach the eyes of men. There is this loneliness of intellectual splendor, in Lucretius — this quality of solitariness in his genius, which I began by speaking of. I know that Virgil was a greater poet, and revere him above all other poets, but in thinking of Lucretius only the old words rise to my lips — "This was the noblest Roman of them all."

VIII

INSPIRATION

You will, perhaps, remember that in opening these lectures a few general principles were suggested with regard to the nature of poetic power, and from time to time I have directed your attention to the presence of some of these principles in the six poets whose genius we have examined. Poetic energy was defined as, in essence, shared and controlled emotion; in its being shared emotion lies its social principle; in its being controlled emotion lies its artistic principle. I have dwelt less, however, on these two subsidiary aspects, and have sought rather to bring out clearly the primary fact that emotion is the base of poetry, and that capacity for it is the radical power of genius, and that the poetic life so led is naturally one of unrest and misfortune. In Marlowe the emotion was an aspiration of all the faculties, the individual making out toward the infinite in all ways; in Camoens it was emotion closely joined with action in a national epic; in Tasso it was emotion disjoined from action and tending to the condition of music, in Byron it was emotion of the heart; in Lucretius it was emotion of the intellect. It was noticed, too, in accordance with the general principle that great literatures arise along the lines of fracture in human progress, that Marlowe was the child of the Renaissance in England, that Camoens was the poet of world-discovery, that Byron was the star of the revolutionary spirit on the

Continent, and Tasso foretold the age of music, and Lucretius stood in the dawn of scientific reason; each occupied a point of vantage, and was, as it were, a mountain crag that caught and flashed on a moment of morning light. Each represented some mood of the world at a culminating point, and with intensity.

The prevailing trait of the poetic temperament in action — its free and lawless nature — has also been exemplified. These poets have left upon our minds, I am persuaded, a sense of their extraordinary vital power, of their strange difference from men in general, and of something that awes us in their genius as if a miraculous element entered into it. The sense of the mystery of spiritual power is felt in connection with these men. It is under the influence of such thoughts as these that men speak of poetic energy as an inspiration; they convey thus their sense that the faculty is something "above man," that it partakes of the mystery of all power in the universe, that it is kindred with what they call the divine. Something — they know not what — but something greater than the man speaks through the man, and there is a virtue in his works that his own unaided power never placed there. I think I describe the feeling fairly in these words. Inspiration is a natural conviction of men with respect to poetry; and to the greater poets themselves it is as natural, for their own works and their states of mind in composing seem beyond and above themselves. This sense of possession, of being caught up into a sphere of greater power, is the true poetic madness, which is so familiar an idea in Greek thought, and is not yet extinct. I have thought it appropriate to close this various survey of the poets with some final remarks on this old mystery, so ineradicable; not with

any idea of solving it at all, but merely to offer some few considerations with regard to it, which have occurred to me from time to time. Let us return, therefore, to that gulf which we found in the first lecture between the primitive dancing and singing horde and the divine poet, and look more closely at the phenomena.

It has been said that "the mental condition of the lower races is the key to poetry"; and you may recall that I defined the poet as "under excitement presenting the phenomenon of a highly developed mind working in a primitive way." Primitive psychology is a subject beyond my ken; but there are a few obvious facts that a modern reader can hardly escape. You will remember that in the dance of the primitive horde the rhythm is very simple, and the cry is perhaps one sound, interminably repeated. Monotony is, in fact, characteristic of primitive life. The repetition has certain uses easily seen. In all thought of primitive conditions it is hardly possible for us to exaggerate the feebleness of the human mind in its emergence from brute conditions. The first use of monotonous repetition is to fasten attention, a difficult thing for the savage mind; power of memory, the power of brain-cells to retain the mental image of a thing or an event, must have been greatly indebted to such a monotonous habit. Again, the repetition assists in labor: songs of labor are not a relaxation but an aid; the Egyptian workmen sing when they are tired; again, the well-known law that every mental idea of an action tends to realize itself in that action is sufficient to account for one definite utility there is in the repeated utterance of such a word as "strike," say, in rhythm before each blow. On the passive side, also, it will be readily understood that monotone has an hyp-

notic and preparatory influence on the mind. Indeed the monotone may be the basis, the exciting cause, or nervous predisposition of the wild passion which breaks forth and possesses the participants in the dance. Any of you who have ever witnessed such performances must have been struck by the singular coexistence in them of monotone and of excitement; the two are linked together — wild excitement such as we never dream of, together with monotony so insistent and prolonged as to seem incredible. I have never heard Tennyson read, but I have heard his reading precisely imitated, and I was struck in it by the same combination — namely, that as the passion grew, the chanted monotony of the lines stood more rigidly. It has been noticed, too, that poets naturally thus chant their lines. Wordsworth did so, and I have heard his reading also imitated with precision. These two elements, monotony and excitement, are faithfully reflected in the Mohometan religion, which is near to primitive habits in all ways. Thus in the several sects of North Africa one is distinguished from another in various ways, and among others by the formula or verse which is repeated by each member a certain number of times daily. Thus the brotherhood of Abd-er-Rahman must recite their formula, seven words, three thousand times a day; the Tsidjani must pray at morning the two words "God pardon" two hundred times, followed by a longer prayer one hundred times repeated, and then one hundred times the formula of seven words. At three o'clock in the afternoon are other similar prayers, and at sunset the same as at morning. In Moslem mosques I have myself sometimes taken the beads from the priest and repeated the formulas as I wandered about, to see what it was like to live in that way. On the

other hand, in the dervish dances the element of excitement in combination with monotony is easily observed. It appears, therefore, that while for us monotony destroys interest and puts us to sleep, under other conditions it is the ground of the highest excitement.

I have a theory — whether I have read it or dreamed it I do not know — that the emergence of man from the brute-stage of life was accompanied by an immense outburst and increase of emotional power. If it were so, the emotion was of this kind; and, without regard to the scientific ground of the theory, it appears to me *prima facie* plausible to this degree, that such emotion was a main condition of the gradual advent of intellectual life. If we remember how weak and unstable then were all mental phenomena, still perhaps more like waking dreams than what we know as continuous and organized mental life, and if we remember also the power of emotion to vivify the mental processes, it is plain that minds so stirred would grow and would store power beyond other minds. The phenomenon would be only what is our well-known experience taking place in a lower plane of being. Excitement increases the speed and power of the mind; the use of stimulants affords such excitement, and when the excitement arises naturally through the emotions, the effect is the same. The state so induced, whether naturally or artifically, does not differ in kind from that of inspiration — that is, a power above the normal from which the subject of it recedes when the mood is gone. Emotion, however induced, discharges itself according to the constitution of the man who feels it; and in primitive life it would discharge itself in this one or that one wildly, wastefully, spasmodically, perhaps, and in brains of a finer or stronger

quality in another way, that is, along directions of thought. The most active brains would be those most capable of emotion.

If emotion played such a part in generating intelligence, it becomes easier to understand the respect paid in all primitive times to those who are described as madmen, and to all who were subject to exalted psychical states from whatever cause; and the impulse which led men to cultivate, as it were, the trance state by artificial or semi-artificial means, which is found in all religions, would seem more normal. Certain it is that about the ancient oracles there gathered intellectual and moral power, and even as at Delphi great guiding power; they were very old places of immemorial inspiration, in all its defined religious forms, its trances, and ecstasies as well as other kinds of soothsaying; they were, in a certain sense, the seats of truth most revered. For the oracles were not places of fraud; fraud entered into and combined with original beliefs and practices, as it has in other religions without number, but only in their decay. Originally the oracles were sincere facts of religion as it then was. There were other concurring causes for their religious primacy; but it seems not unlikely that the power of emotional excitement to unlock and speed intelligence may have been one element of real utility in the phenomenon. Facts of disease, of the action of vapors, of psychical states and susceptibilities that are still obscure, were no doubt involved in the entire primitive attitude to the divine madness; but in the midst of all there remains one thread of sense and reality in the normal power of excitement to set the intellectual powers in uncommon action.

It is also to be observed that monotony characterizes

the primitive mind in another way than has been noticed; no community is so bound in convention, tradition, and routine as the savage horde; just as in the lower organizations of life, the ways of doing once found are fossilized in invariable paths of instinct, as in the bees and ants, so in the primitive horde ways of behavior once established became conventionalized with a rigor that tyranny could never equal. The great difficulty to-day with the primitive African people is to persuade them to do other or different from their fathers. In the primitive horde every one conformed, and especially after superstitious religion began to prevail; that is, every one conformed except the madman — and there could be but one explanation of such a man, he was a sacred person, in some way touched with that power, which, whether it was dæmonic or divine, was pretty much one to the savage mind. Thus primitive man regarded these various phenomena, ranging from the ordinary type of insanity up to the priestess of the temple, as belonging in the region of inspiration, of that power above man which made of them persons apart; and this mood toward them persisted through ages and far into high civilizations. The easy old-fashioned way was to look on all this primitive and pagan belief as merely a structure of superstition and fraud; but this is no longer possible. And it seems to me, speaking speculatively and not dogmatically, that in this universal belief and long adherence to it we may perhaps discern some historic traces of the great function of emotion, as an evolutionary element, in disengaging and freeing and establishing the intellectual powers of the race.

Let us turn now to the phenomena as they appear in the field of civilization. There we see, as in Greece, men under excitement producing poems, dramas, and other

works at moments of exaltation; and their state was described by observers and by themselves as one of poetic madness. It was a theory universally received. What is it that had happened? It seems to be no more than in other cases of excitement, except for a peculiarity in the manner of the discharge of the emotion. Let me recur to the distinction which was alluded to in the first lecture between the power of Dionysus and the power of Apollo, made by the brilliant and unfortunate German writer, Frédéric Nietzsche, in an essay of his youth upon Greek tragedy at a time when he was dominated by enthusiasm for Wagner's music. He divided poetry between the two: to Apollo he ascribed the intellectual part, the dream, the perceptive faculty, the idea as it is known to consciousness, the phenomenal; to Dionysus he gave the intoxication, the self-destruction or renunciation of consciousness, the revel of emotion, the unfathomed energy of existence; or, in brief, the form-giving element in poetry he described as Apollinian, the energy he described as Dionysiac. He worked the theory out in his own way. But it is interesting to find the youngest of our new philosophers adopting and interpreting in modern terms the oldest doctrine of poetry — namely, that it is a madness; and the distinction he draws serves to clarify our thoughts. Dionysus is the god who presides over the emotion as mere energy, as an intoxication, a physical and mental disturbance, an orgy of the muscles and the nerves, a dæmoniac possession. Apollo is the god who presides over inspiration rather in its intellectual issue as a power generating fair forms and clear-shining truths, of which poetry is the embodiment. If you will recall what I have just said, that in the mass of the phenomena there are all sorts of wasteful emotion, but amid them there

is one thread of sense and reality — there where the waste is, is Dionysus raving; there where the single thread is, is Apollo's shining hand.

There is one idea that played a great part in Greek thought — the idea of harmony. Apollo is the god of harmony. Now the Greeks believed that there is a principle of harmony in the world which takes body of itself. It is independant of man, but it may take body through his mind. Thus the great temple, the Parthenon, was a harmony brought into being by man, yet he did not make the harmony. This is the view so familiar to us in Emerson's poem: —

> "These temples grew as grows the grass;
> Art might obey, but not surpass:
> The passive master lent his hand
> To the vast soul that o'er him planned."

That is, there is a principle of harmony in the world independent of art, but through art it takes form and becomes apparent to the eyes or ears or imagination of man. Apollo is the god who so guides the original energy of emotion that out of it issues this fair harmony known through the senses and their imagery to the perceptive powers, that is, to the mind of men. This is what, in the first lecture, was called the dream that attends emotion, the sensuous and intellectual part; but it was also there said that the dream is not something added to emotion, but is the product of the emotion itself. The Dionysiac orgy ends in the physical state, and when the body is exhausted the emotion is spent and gone; the inspiration of Apollo ends in an intellectual harmony of poetry or music or other art, and this work abides after the emotion is spent — is indeed the enduring and eternal form

of that fleeting emotional overflow in the soul and body of the poet and artist. It was natural that inspiration should gradually become restricted, as a term, to this particular operation of emotion by virtue of which it realizes for the mind the principle of harmony, whether under the form of reason — that is, of truth — or under those forms of the senses which we call the arts. Inspiration, then, is, in this view, emotion vivifying and giving clearness and speed to the intellect, out of whose store of memory and imagination it creates that dream in which it immortalizes its moment. Emotion flooding the higher soul of man, and not merely his physical part — flooding the rational soul, and there creatively productive according to the harmonic laws of that realm — that is the power of Apollo, that is inspiration in the artistic sense.

Wherein, then, is the madness? for it is agreed that the man so affected is out of his senses and not his own master; he is an instrument, a voice, not personal but oracular; a passive master, as Emerson says, who has lent his body and soul to the god. Is it, then, indeed, so strange? or is not this a thing familiar to us all in our daily lives? Do we not all have such moments, so charged with emotion that we seem taken out of ourselves, so filled with intensity of life that we seem unconscious — moments when new truths come with a physical flash on the eye, when perceptions of beauty illuminate the soul with sudden and ample glory, when motions of love expand the spirit and pour it abroad — and then comes darkness, and we fail from out the mood; but yet do not altogether fail, for the memory of the truth stays with us, that beauty has illuminated all our days, those motions of love have expanded the heart forever; it is on

the memory of such moments that we live. You remember that Gray found these moments, in their most intense, revealing and exalted power, in the times of bereavement; and I suppose that is the commonest experience of humanity. But in any part of experience they may arise, in its gloom or in its brightness; and when they arise is it not true, especially if the experience be prolonged or recurrent, that we seem to ourselves not entirely our own masters and to others somewhat out of our senses?

The difference that makes the poet lies in the fact that by some peculiarity of organization he stamps an image of his soul at such moments in a work of art, and what is for us a thing of the private life becomes through genius a thing of the public good. He, too, fails from out the mood, but this work of his remains; he feels in the same way as we the mystery of the experience; he cannot repeat it; he cannot summon the inspiration at will; he can only observe its times and seasons, and be in a state of preparedness for the god — to use the religious phrase — for inspiration has its conditions, like all mortal things, and these are subject to knowledge. If you will read Emerson's essay on Inspiration, you will find that he employs nearly the whole of it in laying down these conditions; yet they might, I think, all be present, and the inspiration not occur.

Now, if you will apply what is true of our own lives to the life of the race in time, you will have a fair image of the relation of literature to civilization. The great poets, the great ages of poetry, are such selected and fortunate moments of the life of the race when the power of emotion was roused and released, and especially released in those harmonic forms of the rational

soul, poetry, art, truth, which are all essentially forms of the reason; in these men the flowering of the soul takes place in time. The race lives long upon the memory of them, measures its own capacity by them, and believes that in them, if anywhere, it touches the divine pulses of the world. Poetic madness is thus no more than the common emotional experience of men in a form of higher intensity, and especially characterized by the trait that it leaves an artistic product in which the emotion is permanently recorded. Furthermore, it should be observed that men of genius occupy very often a position analogous to the primitive madman who does not conform his behavior to the ways of the tribe; the poet is by his nature somewhat lawless, especially when under the control of his genius; and he is often regarded, therefore, as dangerous, diabolical, denounced as an atheist and sent off into the desert, disowned and defamed; in other words, being the announcer of new moods and new truths, he is distrusted by men of the past and society as already organized in belief and practice; genius, in fact, is the principle of variation in society, it is the element in which the new comes to birth; and to the old the new always seems a madness because it is in contradiction with that past experience which is the test of sanity for the bulk of men. Poetic madness, then, is characterized not only by the fact that it leaves an artistic product, but also by the fact that this product is a new birth in the world.

Let us consider now, in the light of these conceptions, that course of changes in the beliefs and moods of men that we commonly denominate progress, of which great literatures are the record. You will remember that I spoke of great literatures as being in the landscape of

the mind like mountain ranges that mark the emotional upheavals of the race; and I have just spoken of them again as being the places where the race believes that it touches the divine pulses of the world. It is convenient to recur to the conception of Lucretius as he expresses it in the great invocation with which he begins his poem; he addresses the energy of nature and prays that this power which brings forth the springtime will inspire his mind; inspiration, for him, is this breathing and awakening power in his mind, which is one with all power. He conceived of man as evolved out of nature without any divine intelligence in the process; the eye was not made to see nor the ear to hear, but these senses had arisen under the conditions existing and had become what they could; that was his theory. Man is born in the world of nature, and I suppose we shall all agree that man's life in nature as he rose through stages of animal and primitive life was a hard struggle; nature was not altogether his friend, and civilization slowly won seems to have been won somewhat in spite of nature, and nature is still very indifferent to man and his fortunes; man exists by making what use he can of the foothold he has won in the world of natural law. Man is also born into a psychical world; that is, as his body is subject to natural law, his mind is subject to another sphere of law, the law of mind. Man's faculties have unfolded, we may suppose, in the same way as his senses, under the conditions of the case; they were not created but have evolved. Nor is there any reason to believe, so far as I can see, that the world of mind is any more friendly to man than the world of nature has shown itself to be. Certainly the race began by being merged in profound ignorance, and in its first steps it was plunged in universal

error, especially in respect to what we call higher truth. It was long before the errors of the senses — as for example that the sun moves round the earth — were corrected. In the field of religion the first essays of the race were universally what we now call savage superstition, a realm of magic and senseless formulas, of the worship of stones and animals, and it was long before the conception of immortality itself was other than a gloom or a curse; the way upward from the ideas and moods of primitive man to such ideas and moods as prevail in that small section of mankind which is called enlightened was as hard a way as the way of material civilization in nature has been. Man has always been in peril, and has often suffered. Emotion is one great part of psychical life; but it is plain that the history of emotion has been as much a record of disaster as the history of reason has been a record of error. If you read the history of religion and attend to the kind and quality and issue of emotion toward the divine, what an extraordinary chapter it is of folly and pain and evil! It is only slowly that emotion found out the useful and guiding ways, the illuminating, the humanizing ways of its life; just as slowly reason found out its true methods in thought.

Poetry, at its birth, marks the point of victory in this career, in this experimentation of emotional energy; thereafter it gave the scale of value to emotion. Emotion had value in proportion as it became such inspiration as Lucretius prayed for, and passed into the intellect and was there discharged in poetry, or music, or sculpture, or other forms of art, and, in the scientific realm, of truth; there it evoked and bodied forth that principle of harmony which seems to be the main fact of the psy-

chical world, the world of the perceptions, the world of mind. The function of poetry is to qualify the emotional life of the race as the function of science is to qualify its rational life. The test of emotion is its capacity to produce poetry, as the test of reason is its capacity to produce science. The wasteful and destructive emotion, the intoxication and raving, the physical exhaustion and death of Dionysus is laid off and avoided; the creative emotion issuing in harmonies of the mind which we call the life of the spirit — this, the inspiration of Apollo, is preferred. The soul has a sure instinct in these matters; as a rule, it forgets the past rapidly and gladly, but it holds in its memory and clings invincibly to the great ages in which this harmony was most given out — to poetry which is the most immortal of human works, to art in all its culminating periods, to Greece as the most fruitful mother of both beauty and intellect under the guardianship of the Delphic inspiration.

The mood of the world changes. Race differs from race, and age from age, in mood as well as in ideas. Each race and age creates its own poetry, according to its place in civilization and the power of its life. I was much struck by the mood of the Mohammedan religion — by its sincerity, its dignity, and the fitness of the mood to the nature of the people. The bare and quiet mosques seemed to me a fitter place for the presence of the living god of the desert, the god of boundless nature, than any Christian cathedral I ever entered. In a Christian church I am apt to feel something of the confinement of a tomb, the air of one; the service seems a watch for the resurrection. Not only does race differ from race, but man from man in the mood of life; the

test of the mood, of its value in the scale of worth, is its power to give out the noble dream, body forth a poetic form for itself, or if not to create one freshly, to find one among those offered by the poets, musicians, artists, and prophets of the world. The service of the poets is to provide such forms of feeling for mankind. The variety of such forms now in the world is great in every field of life, in the Bibles of the race, in the battle songs of nations, in the love and death songs and the faith songs of many ages. The range of value in these is from the lowest to the highest; they are higher in proportion as they contain a more perfect beauty, a more pure truth, a more simple harmony of many elements.

Is the inspiration, then, divine, and do all these forms proceed from one infinite power that prompts them? Many a poet and many a prophet has so affirmed it of his own work — but when Mahomet says that he has talked with God, there is a grave shaking of heads. It would seem that Jehovah hardly escaped the curse he visited upon Babel, but has himself spoken to the nations in many tongues. It is not necessary to be too well assured. The name of the god adds nothing to the truth of the doctrine. The god of poetry is certainly, as Tennyson says, the nameless one; the source of inspiration is no more known than the source of the other moods by which our being is sustained. It belongs to our sense of the infinite in which man feels he vaguely shares, that the inspiration is inexhaustible, and continually puts forth a new form. The diversity of these forms, viewed in their length and compass from the beginning and through the world, is one miracle; the second and greater miracle is that there is forever, age after age, an ever new birth of the hitherto unknown and

unexpected. The mood of the world is forever renewed. The poets contain this element of promise; in them is the thing that shall be; they are the wings on which the new sphere swims into our ken. The infinite energy, of which Lucretius sang, has thus its times of putting forth in the race, its springtides of fresh abundance, its blossoming from age to age, from race to race; there is no finality in any of its blossoms; but it never ceases to put forth another and another strange and unknown flower.

I have spoken to but little purpose if I have not already made it plain that the poetic energy, the emotion and the dream, the madness, is common to men and belongs to the soul by its own nature. The poetic life is not the privilege of some, but the path of all, and the passion and the power to lead it is the measure of every man's soul. Men may be great in other ways, great in trade and politics and war; but they are great in soul in proportion as they are poets. Just as in the original dancing horde all were poets, so is it still; there may be one among them who leads the dance, but all may join hands and voices and follow on in unison. The poetic impulse is universal; from the emotional urgency of life itself no one can escape, but he may avail himself of it only for the drunkenness of the senses, for the raving physical waste of the untaught, unbridled madness; but the man must have, besides the power of emotion which nature pours into him, the wise use of this power; and if he have wisdom in his soul, he will strive to be inducted rather into the choir of Apollo, and behold and share in those forms of beauty and truth in which the harmony of the world is seen, for these forms of beauty and truth, revealed in poetry and shaped in art, are the intellectual

children of emotion. In their company and gazing upon them and habituating his eyes to their presence, he will form his own soul after their pattern; for these works are so intimately bound with the emotion out of which they sprang into being, they are so instinct with its immortal vigor, that they generate the same emotion in the beholder according as he has power to receive it and take its form in his own soul; it is thus that the poets are the guardians of the soul. Their office is to nourish the poet that is in each one of us, and to free the poetic energy in our bosoms in noble forms of our own private life; for by commerce with the poets the creative energy steals into the breast, and there builds with original force in the life that is most inviolably our own and unshared by and unknown to the world. The great part of mankind lead this life mostly under the phases of religion, whose emotional modes are fixed in forms of dignity, beauty and power sanctioned by long use; but in other fields the poetic life is neglected.

I am the more struck, I think, as I grow older, with the sense of how small a part of mankind, and how few persons in any generation, really possess the higher fruits of civilization; and consequently how frail is man's hold even on the good which he has so hardly won. It is not only liberty which can be quickly lost, but every supreme blessing. How intermittent and brief the life of the arts has been; how rare is a poetic age and how soon extinct, if one looks at the general history of the world! We are fortunate in the time of our birth, in our inherited poetry, and in the flourishing of reason among us; the opportunity for the poetic life is put into our hands; all of us, if we will, can acquire that wise use of emotion which I have tried to emphasize. For like all

power, emotion is a thing of danger; in the hands of the foolish it often destroys them; and the wisest cannot better secure himself than by developing his emotions through the poets and their kindred. He will, so doing, find that emotion is the servant of the highest reason; for that principle of harmony which emotion gives out and unveils in its finite forms is the element that reason takes note of as the eye takes note of light. The true opposition is between the infinite and the finite. Emotion lies in the sphere of the infinite; the infinite is inexhaustible, and hence there is no finality in the works of genius or in our own lives, as poets and artists are the first to confess, for they have no sooner finished their work than they are discontented with it and throw it aside. You will never seize the poet in his poem, for he has already left it; and the poem is only the prophet's garment that he leaves behind him in your hands. Inspiration resides in the infinite, in emotion. Reason, even the creative reason, is of the finite, the measured, the known; its works are renewed from the great deep, the throbbing of life itself, inexhaustibly; and hence after each of the great and glorious toils of genius, each emanation of the dream, whether individual or the labor of a race, when the last stroke is struck, the last word said, and the light begins to die off — then emotion, which is of the infinite, again supervenes, still brooding in itself some new world, some new gospel of gladder tidings of greater joy.

An address before the Bronx Society of Arts and Sciences, New York, January 19, 1909, on the centenary of the birth of Poe.

THE POE CENTENARY[1]

We are gathered here to do honor to genius. One name is on our lips, one memory is in our hearts — that of Edgar Allan Poe. Sixty years ago five mourners stood round his grave; today in five great cities of the nation, and elsewhere, men gather, as we do here, by scores and hundreds, to commemorate his birth. It is because genius, once born into life, is indestructible; it is safe alike from any stroke of earthly fortune and from time's attack, it is the immortal vigor of the race. Men do not willingly let the memory of it die; men protect its memory, and this is singularly true of Poe. No American name in literature is, I think, so warmly cherished. It is a pleasure, too, to recognize American genius, and today it is an added grace that Poe was a child of the South. He was, nevertheless, both in his genius and his life, remarkably free from locality. It has not been sufficiently observed hitherto, I think, that more than any of his contemporaries Poe occupied a central position in his generation; he was better acquainted with the literary product of the time, and both by his residence and his letters was in touch with a wide area of the country. He had lived in Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, and had repeatedly visited New England, and his correspondence reached Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville, Tennessee and Georgia. More than the others, he had national range.

Poe was a Southerner by his breeding; he was an American by his career; he was a citizen of the world

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by his renown. It was a distinguishing trait of his personality that when his first tales were hardly dry from the press, he was already negotiating for publication in England. He always belonged in spirit to the larger world. The adventurous sense of it was his cadet dream of joining the armies of Poland when he left West Point. The literary stamp of it was that in the first lines of his criticism, unfledged critic that he was, he set up a standard, not that of the leisured hearth of Virginia or the newspaper offices of New York or the parlor coteries of Boston, but the standard of all the world; and though he contracted opportunism, that was only the wear and tear of practical life on a fine ideal.

But it is not enough to be a critic. No critic ever had his hundredth birthday celebrated. Poe was from his youth an all-round man of letters. One trait which peculiarly wins the respect of his fellow craftsmen, I think, is that he never was anything else but a man of letters. He never earned any money except by his pen. He labored twenty years; for four of these he had a salary as an editor, and a dozen times he spoke from a platform; otherwise he was an unattached writer and lived from day to day. I have no manner of doubt he was sincere in saying that in thus adhering to his profession he cheerfully bore poverty. His profession pauperized him. Is it not startling to think that we are gathered here, in a city which is the shrine and throne of gold, to do honor to a man who was a beggar all his days? It is a striking tribute to true values. I make no complaint of fate. Literature dedicates her sons to the vow of worldly sacrifice. It has been so of old time. He was not chosen to be poor more than the others were chosen. Hawthorne and Emerson and Poe

— the three most brilliant men in our literature — all led meager lives, but Poe alone was the perfect victim. Poe not only lived meagerly; at times he starved. Poverty is a terrible foe; it is thorough in its work on men and nations; it kills. What a victory it is of the spirit over its life, of the spirit that makes for immortality through all disguises of human wretchedness — that we have today in our minds and hearts, out of Poe's meager and starved life, poetry, romance, the imagery that fades not away! It is true that there is that in it which terrifies; here is the legend and superscription of pain and death; his music is the requiem of the soul that breathed it forth. But his, too, is praise. Poe made of his fate his victory; and, for the victim of life, that is the master-stroke. We "bid fair peace be to his sable shroud."

It is fit now, though late, to bring the laurel to him who first sent the dark green leaf across the sea to Tennyson and Mrs. Browning, and among ourselves brought it to Hawthorne and Lowell in their obscure years. And he has more to grace his memory — that which all men value, the kindly recollection of those who were most nigh him. Poe won the laurel and the marble; but the mortal flower upon his grave is this — that he endeared himself to his friends. He had many friends. He had the best. There was no truer gentleman then alive than Kennedy, who to the honor of Baltimore befriended his early manhood. There was no more kindly colleague than Willis, who gave him his hand in New York and never drew it away. There were no warmer comrades for mates in life than Thomas, Halleck and Burr. Poe had also that power which is one of the singularities of genius — the power to let

the soul shine on all. His office-boy idolized him; children suffered him to play with them; and every wayfarer who touched his hand or had speech of him on his wandering road, seems to have remembered the light of that day forever.

Such are some of the thoughts that rise in me on this occasion. I seem to share them with you. These traits of fortune and of character to which I have alluded, belong to humanity, and link genius to the understanding hearts of men; but genius is itself the most revealing force of the soul; its manifestations are revelations of our nature. The genius of Poe was one of the manifold forms of humanity; else it were not genius; but that man who would speak rightly of him must, in his vision of human nature, have room and marge enough to know that the spirit of life is Infinite in its flowering, that the Shepherd of us all has many folds.

SHAKESPEARE, AN ADDRESS

An address delivered at the celebration of the tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare, under the auspices of the department of English of Brown University, in Sayles Hall, April 26, 1916

SHAKESPEARE

It is not for any single voice to bear to Shakespeare the plaudits of the theater. The mere multiplicity of the events of this wide commemoration, the volume of universal applause of the generations, force us to realize the insignificance of any particular expression of the general praise. As in a popular festival, each participant, as he passes, follows his own whim in the common carnival. The scholar will turn the leaves of his book and linger caressingly over recondite difficulties of the text or the meaning; the player will fit the costume to the mind, and play the part from his bosom. Everything will go on as in a play. To-day all the world 's a stage. For the most part, it is by the eye that Shakespeare's world will be seen, embodied in a fantastic round of revels, a general masquerade, a pageant, how varied, how familiar, how interminable!

Shakespeare's world!

> "Create he can
> Forms more real than living man!"

Falstaff, Ariel, Titania's Indian Boy! How they throng the memory as if coming through a hundred-gated Thebes! If it is by its transitoriness that we know life, it is by its permanence that we know the ideal. There is an eternal quality, an everlasting freshness, on the intellectual creations of man, analogous to the morning luster that still lingers on the Eros, the Apollo, the

Hermes, of ancient days. Who of English speech, bred to traditions of his race, does not recognize Hamlet in his "inky cloak" at a glance? Not to know him would argue one's self untaught in the chief glories of his language. With what a welcome eye we greet the Henrys, old John of Gaunt, old York, and how many a young prince of brief or long renown! We are able to look in Prospero's Magic Book, though buried deeper than ever plummet sounded. What a story is recorded there, familiar to our sight since our childish eyes first fell on some glorious picture of the luminous leaf! What is most impressive to me, in a world whose characteristic it is to pass away, is the permanence of these ideal incarnations of human life in its vital flow and infinite variety. It is three hundred years since the Maker of Magic passed; yet his figures seem to have left us but an hour ago. They combine, as they recede, into a Renaissance procession, wreathing along in another age than ours; they compose, in the distance, into a true triumph of time, with many a medieval and classical element of look and gesture; and yet, ere the scene fades, it has opened to our eyes, we know, the timeless vision of life.

Two things in this great vision fascinate me: the charm of the youths, the wisdom of mature age. It is in the earlier plays that I find the spirit of April, mounting with each year into a richer and more delicate bloom. In Richard II, the tenderest of ill-starred princes unfitted for a crown in this tough world, how piercing is the poetic appeal! There is weakness in his lyrical eloquence, but how it climbs the heavens of youth! Biron, on the other hand, is too clever by half for a true court, and needs the protection of a love's

nunnery to give his wits room and air. In this morning mood Shakespeare seems like his own Mercury,

"New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill," —

so irresponsibly vital is his gaiety, the mere play of his mind in all the ways of beauty and sentiment, of wit and laughter, of courage as quick as it is perfect, of grace in the action, and of courtesy, which is the grace of the mind. No less appealing is the maturer atmosphere of his manlier day: the grave demeanor of Theseus, the inviolable peace of Prospero. In these two I find touches of an almost Lucretian calm — that quiet,

"Yearned after by the wisest of the wise,
Passionless bride, divine tranquillity,"

but never so brought down to earth as in Shakespeare's dream. For to my eyes the great vision, at either limit of its range, in its charm of youth, in its wisdom of age, wears the aspect of a dream. There Shakespeare's poetry, as apart from its dramatic grasp of the passions, was at its ripest. The fabric is compact of illusion; yet this charm, this wisdom, are compelling in all lands. You may sketch the frontiers of civilization by the echo of Shakespeare's name. Truth sometimes uses a dream as its best medium: such is poetic truth. There is an abstract element in poetic truth; it is not for an age, but for all time. Truth in Shakespeare — that which greatly distinguishes him — is poetic truth. It is capacity to express poetic truth that measures a civilization. To realize life in the abstract as noble or beautiful or humane, to set it forth so with radiance upon it — that is civilization in the arts. Shakespeare is the chief modern example of this supreme faculty of mankind.

Prospero, you remember, is sometimes taken as a symbol of creative genius. He declares his might:

> "graves at my command
> Have waked their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art."

The characters, it is true, bear the old names that they once bore in history or romance before their waking; but when they walk a second time, they are made of a finer than earthly substance, they have more than mortal speech; they have suffered an ideal change. They are creatures seen by the mind's eye. They are no longer individuals; a universal element has entered into them, wherein if any man look he sees his own face. These are not men, but man; it is thence that they are immortal in literature. The power of evocation, such as Prospero describes it, is the most convincing proof of genius. Evocation is its royal stamp. So the statue slept in marble until Michael Angelo evoked it from the block; so music sleeps until it is evoked from the chords; so the Virgin's face is evoked from the canvas. The vision seems magical at its first creation, whatever be the art through whose medium it comes.

Art, thus, from the beginning of civilization has brought new worlds into being. They blaze out like intermittent stars and fade away: the divine sphere of Plato's youths, the world of Plutarch's men, the thronged region of the Renaissance romances whence came Shakespeare's ideal women. How many worlds of art there have been! how strange it is to fall in with one of them unexpectedly, like some lost province of the mind or some far country that we know not of! I remember years ago at Naples coming upon the Pompeian painting of the ancient time.

It was then that the figures of the mythological world and the legendary age of Greece first became visible images to me — a Theseus, a Jason, a Medea; and the Greek past, which had lain in my mind in a sculptural form rather than pictorially, took on the romanc of color with a certain strangeness in the look of the mer — a racial strangeness. It was as if I had wandered into a forgotten chamber of the world. Art, in all the fields of the imagination, has many of these lost provinces in its domain, stretching over the centuries of man's various fortunes with the soul.

There is something foreign to us in any past; but the past is known to us, in its spiritual part, only by these evocations embodying the passions of life. They are not historic; they are ideal. They are not individual; they are abstract. They are more or less intelligible according to our own understanding powers; but taken together, they constitute the true story of man's life. As we review the record, even to the "dark backward and abysm of time," notwithstanding all strangeness in the aspect of the vision under the varying light of time's changes, these evocations of art in all its forms are the clearest memorial of the soul's life, age after age. It is the least encumbered with unconcerning things. It writes one truth large on the ruins of time in each great age, whatever be the city or the people: this truth — that it is the victory in the field of the spirit that decides a nation's glory.

Shakespeare is the chief glory of England. What Homer was to the ancient world, Virgil to imperial Rome, Dante to medieval Italy, that Shakespeare was to the English. His name, as we envisage it, breaks, like a constellation, into stars, some major some minor, a clus-

ter of world-names now — Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Macbeth, a progeny endless as Banquo's line. Each character clothes himself with a new world — as it were, new heavens and a new earth. What noble landscapes! the forest of Arden, the Midsummer Wood, the enchanted isle, Venice, Verona, Rome! In the art of evocation Shakespeare held a master's wand. Scarce any other poet seems so facile and so various in creation. It is, perhaps, an error of perspective that gives so strong a character of multiplicity to his imaginative world. The drama has crowded its own stage in every poetic land. There was much detail and variety in Virgil, if one attends to them, in the changeful flow of the verse. Shakespeare seems to us more abundant, too, in part because we are native to his world. It was our childhood region. I began to know his work, where I like to think he first made acquaintance with himself, in the Histories. I first saw him, I remember, in that company of English Kings, which is one of the bravest panoramas of history. Every verse in those great chronicles vibrates with English blood. It was thus as a national poet that he first trod the stage. To this day there is no such vital history as he wrote, be the scene where it may. In him Holinshed and even Plutarch, noble as they are in their own speech, leapt to a life above life. But it is the Rose of England that he most summons from the dust. It is a baptism of patriotism for a boy to be nursed on the English plays. Shakespeare was so great an Englishman from the first.

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptr'd isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise;

This fortress built by Nature for herself . . .
This precious stone set in the silver sea, . . .
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England!"

With what a flow, with what a strength, with what a radiance the verse mounts! And in many another passage of martial ardor or the victorious cry of arms, one hears the living echo of Agincourt still pulsing along that far horizon-air. Yet this was but the golden portal of Shakespeare's verse.

The first incarnation of his genius was in history; the last incarnation, more powerfully spiritual, was in fate. There was an interval when his spirit walked in an enchanted pastoral land, sown with wild forest and vistas of Italy; and there was an afterworld of poetic romance, from which everything except pure reality has been eliminated, which was his farewell to life. In these Comedies of either group there was the glamour of another age than ours. In the Histories and Tragedies we encounter a reality more distinctly of our world — a reality seen with the seriousness of youth in the one, with the seriousness of age in the other. What gives to the Comedies their tranquil atmosphere, their touch of fantasy, their other-worldliness, is the Renaissance, the preceding age out of which their characters trooped, bringing their landscape with them, together with their costume, revels, and speech. The substance of the Comedies is the very stuff of the Renaissance in its earthly look and mortal feeling. It is a world of accidents garbed in romance — the world of the Renaissance imagination. In the Tragedies, on the other hand, the garment of Time is stripped off. The world may be Denmark or Scotland; it is indifferent. Cyprus and Britain are but names. It is a world of realities, the

world of the stark soul. It is true that whatever be the sensible garniture of the play, its times, occasions and mental modes, the ideas are still the ideas of the Renaissance. Shakespeare is, essentially, the emanation of the Renaissance. The overflow of his fame on the Continent in later years was but the sequel of the flood of the Renaissance in Western Europe. He was the child of that great movement, and marks its height as it penetrated the North with civilization. That was his world-position. It made him even a greater European than he was a great Englishman, and gave him a vaster country than his nativity conferred. His genius exceeds his age, and is a universal possession; and this is because he transcended the accidents of the Renaissance, fair and far-spread as they were and much as he employed them; and in the great tragedies which seem at times supra-mortal, while still using the spell of the ideas that the Renaissance gave him, read the fates of men, in a universal tongue.

Every great movement, nevertheless, such as we name universal, has the limitations of its arc. Our understanding of Shakespeare already depends largely on the vitality of Renaissance elements in our education. Each man must live in his own generation, as the saying is; but the generations are bound together by the golden links of the great tradition of civilization. A writer is justly called universal when he is understood within the limits of his civilization, though that be bounded by a country or an age. Seasonal changes, as it were, take place in history, when there is practically an almost universal death, a falling of the foliage of the tree of life. Such were the intervals between the ancient and medieval time, the medieval and the modern. The

immense amount of commentary on Shakespeare proves the decay of his material, and of his modes of thought and expression, quite as much as it illustrates his profundity. The Renaissance has long been a past age, and now rapidly recedes. Shakespeare's scenic world, at least, begins to have the strangeness of aspect which I said I first recognized in Pompeian painting. Much in the present festivals in his memory — reconstructions of his epoch — is antiquarian. He has still his lightning-stroke at the moment of fate, his musical eloquence in speech, his lovely settings of emotion; but the eye is blind that does not see that Shakespeare's imaged world is as remote as

> "all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come."

Art, I know, by the apparent contemporaneity of its masterpieces denies time. Genius has an eternal quality in its substance. Beauty has everlastingness. I walk through the museum of Athens, by the calm bas-reliefs of the farewells of death, with no thought of antiquity. I read a knightly romance as if the morning sunlight still bathed its green forest and shining armor. The violets I find in my books are the same that grow in my garden. Life is always a present moment. But when art, like Prospero plucking off his magic garment, lays aside its apparent contemporaneity — that illusion of eternity which is implicit in our consciousness of the present moment — it resumes mortality; it contracts decay; it disintegrates into history. Shakespeare's art suffers the common fate — yet with a difference, with an immortal greatness. It grows remote. Strangeness creeps into its aspect. But it is equal to its peers, and

still looks at us with the unfathomed eyes of Apollo or of Oedipus.

The changelessness of art depends upon the slowness of change in man's appreciation of it. That change may be as gradual as a summer's day; it may be as abrupt as an earthquake rift; but finally it transforms a civilization. Through whatever secular changes, the expression in the eyes of life is mystery. Such, too, is the final expression in the eyes of art. To me the expression seems more and more enigmatic as art recedes. The mystery of the fates of men is, I think, best expressed in English with poetic truth in the tragedies of Shakespeare, as the beauty of life is best displayed in his pastoral comedies and kindred plays. However time may pluck at them, they still speak a universal language. It is true that Shakespeare concentrated the Renaissance age, and that was another world than ours; we see it in an evening light; but we are its lineal children and its language is native to our minds. No greater age ever robed humanity in a shining garment. The garment may fade, but the soul remembers long its great epochs and makes of their master-spirits its sacred guardians; for the unseen commonwealth, the true State, is spiritual, and has spiritual guardians.

Art — and I always mean to include in the general term the fine art of literature — art, so understood, is the solvent of the nations. That is how Shakespeare came to be a great European. The Renaissance liberated him from nationality in a provincial sense. He was one of the fathers, and is now a chief pillar, of the invisible republic of letters, or intellectual State, which is the core of modern civilization. Impalpable as any ideal commonwealth of old thinkers, this State is a

spiritual reality. Shakespeare helped materially to shape its present form. The community of scholars in medieval days rested on a universal language, Latin. The Renaissance broke the bonds of that great tongue, rich with the accumulations of thought and knowledge through the centuries of its millennial career; but not before a common mold of thought had been established in the diverse nations, and mental intercommunication between them assured. Latinity receded from the world in all forms, especially in language; but art still made a universal appeal in so far as it spoke directly to the senses in painting and sculpture, architecture and music; and though poetic art uses a screen of language and approaches the senses through the mind, its creations, when they become visible through the screen of language, are found to be woven of the same original stuff that the sister arts employ.

There is this kinship and essential identity in all the arts. Shakespeare, indeed, employed his special tongue, the English, with a superb touch on its forms of expression; but far greater than any linguistic skill was that creative might with which, time and again, he modeled a world of the universal mind, so compact of loveliness, sweetness, or grandeur that the words are but its initial harmonies. It is in this world of the mind that he is so great a master. Therefore other realms than England quickly stripped the screen of language from his work and made him European by their diverse tongues as he already embodied the intellectual fires and romantic horizons of the general age. He contributed powerfully, by his sheer inner worth and charm as a poet, to the transfusion of national cultures which has long characterized western civilization, has made its nations intellec-

tually hospitable, and has most continued the inheritance of that great tradition which poured originally from antiquity, and through the Renaissance overspread Europe. It is thus, however slowly, that the world is unified. The republic of letters has no frontiers.

> "Greece and her foundations are
> Built below the tides of war."

It is a spiritual State, and bears in its hands "olives of endless peace."

Shakespeare, through embodying the Renaissance, was thus a main force in "humanizing," in the scholarly sense, the modern age. By the brilliancy of his genius he conciliated nations. This was to serve humanity greatly. It should not be forgotten on his anniversary. But the effect of Shakespeare historically on world-currents is less to us to-day than his elemental magic in the ways of genius. Genius is known by its works. There it is obvious to all; but who would dare analyze its creative light? I only venture the suggestion that one characteristic of genius in its works is immediate vision — what is sometimes called intuitive vision — and that one measure of its force is the intensity of the vision. Genius in its creative works does not proceed by calculation, by any adaption of means to ends, or by any mode of mechanical processes. It uses neither foresight nor afterthought; its works are made at a single cast. That is why I have spoken of its works in the arts as "evocations." The summons is instantaneous, and instantly obeyed. Genius does not proceed as if by mental logic from step to step; it does not reason things out; it makes no use of analysis. It sees its object as if by revelation, as an image disclosed. It

resembles rather, in its operation, the processes of vital growth. However long may be the unconscious preparation of nature, the plant blossoms in a night — a single unguessed and exquisite bloom. The vision of genius comes as a whole and instantaneous, as a face floats into the air of memory.

There is this immediacy in the creations of art as they arise in the mind. So little are they foreseen that they are always a surprise. So little are they planned that they often puzzle their own creator to interpret them. So little are they indebted to ordinary reason that poets have always called them "inspirations." They do not spring from observation, however long or profound. Never do they repeat any experience of the actual. They are free from the world of nature. These creations have a world of their own — a mental world. Shakespeare's visible world is in "the mind's eye." The mental world is a true world, like nature; but it contains greater reality. Balzac used to say, turning from his callers to his books — "Now for real people." A universal element enters into the mental world. It is the sphere of poetic truth, Shakespeare's world. It was the place of his vision of life. Nothing of Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Macbeth, was ever actual in experience; nothing such as their fatal histories was ever observed. The truth their souls contain is purely mental; it is poetic truth. Shakespeare presents truth in a vision of that world which exists only in "the mind's eye." Yet who does not perceive that his world is more "real than living man," and unveils the fates of men with a revealing range and search beyond nature? It is here that genius inhabits and creates.

In this poetic world Shakespeare, as he matured, de-

veloped in his genius a penetration and intensity that seem not only beyond nature, but at times beyond mortal power. It is in the four great tragedies that he most impresses us so. Tragedy is for youth. Nature draws a film over the eyes of youth which tempers the sight to that fierce light; but for older eyes,

> "Grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars,"

it is too strong a ray. Even in youth one sometimes lays down the book. The mind turns from the four tragedies to the earlier "moonlight and music and feeling" of the charmed meadows and woods and cities of the pastoral plays and their kin, much as Tennyson turned from Milton's angel hosts to delights of Paradise:

> "Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
> And brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
> And bloom profuse and cedar arches
> Charm."

So, too, one turns from the "Inferno" of Dante to the sweetness and glory of the "Paradiso." The genius of the tragedies is, indeed, more transcendent; but there is greater fascination in beauty than in terror. It may be noticed that the tragedies are full of vision, not doctrine. No judgment is passed on what is revealed. It is as if the poet said, "Look, and pass." This is what I have called the world of the stark soul. At times it scarcely suffers words. The pastoral comedies, on the other hand, are garmented with lovely phrase. They are not free from melancholy shades, as at the close of "Love's Labor's Lost." "The scene begins to cloud," says Biron, but it is only with natural grief. For the most part the tragic lot of man is in the background, if it intrude at all. We know the sadness of Antonio, in

the "Merchant of Venice," but not what secrets of mortality it concealed.

In the pastoral comedies, as I somewhat inaptly term them from their sentiment rather than from their landscape, we are in the old, almost antique world of romance. Romanticism had its nest in Greece. We feel its nativity in such a play as "Pericles." The chance adventures of travel, the outlandish regions, the surprising incidents, the shipwrecks, the general sense of a roving world — in brief, a thousand details of composition — remind us how recently the drama had emerged from chaos of romantic fiction. The world of Shakespeare is full of this variety in detail, like a book of the Italian Renaissance, and with the variety there blended an omnipresent strangeness equally characterizing that age of which the very breath was mental discovery. The human spirit was like an immigrant in a new country: anything might happen there. The tradition of the past is felt in Shakespeare's story, both in its materials and its methods of narration; but it is a past whose breath of life was romance, and awoke in Shakespeare's mind as in a world about to be born. Shakespeare was great as an Englishman; he was greater as an emanation of the Renaissance which he drew into himself; but, greatest of all, he was the blazing star of romanticism, when its unearthly beauty took possession of the European world.

It is characteristic of genius when it is greatest, to include a broad arc of man's progress in its own career. Thus practically an entire cycle of romantic art may be observed in Shakespeare's drama. It began in archaism! it ended in a climax of perfection. It is multiple and composite, characterized by an incessant change of theme and heterogeneity of material. It has the mis-

cellaneousness as well as the large horizons of the Elizabethan mind. It is a drama as romantic in method as in subject. Exuberance is the quality of the creative genius that produced it, and infinite variety marks its works. His genius is ever companioned by a wandering spirit. Consider the many disguises in which he uses the device of the episode, as, for instance, the play within the play, the introduced dance or masque, the tale, the soliloquy, or more subtly in the brief idyllic passages that are for poetry what "purple patches" are for rhetoric. Yet, however far or often genius may accompany this wandering elf, it keeps within the magic limit which holds all in true unity. This romantic surface, like a phosphorescence playing over the dramas, is an incessant and growing phenomenon of Shakespeare's art. Not less obvious is the unity of feeling in them — what is sometimes called "keeping" — which is an essential part of romantic unity, and which operates with such force in Shakespeare as to place each of his plays in a world of its own.

The singularity of his genius is that while expressing itself so admirably that at each new disclosure it seems to have arrived at perfection in its kind, it grows nobler, grander, or sweeter at each new creation. It belongs to most of us to seize on some single aspect of art, and to cleave to it. Taste, by a reversion of type, may recur to the archaic and primitive, especially under the impulse of a preference for simplicity. It may, at least, without going to such lengths, require that there be only few elements in high beauty — a single bloom in an isolated vase, or, as the custom now often is in museums, one supreme statue in a room dedicated to it. Taste, such as this, finds romantic art too distracting

in theme, too overwhelming in feeling. The tragedies and later romances have too much depth of thought, too much richness of decoration, too much mystery (whether of terror or beauty), for minds of such a caliber. At most they find pleasure in the golden comedies that sprang to light before Shakespeare's genius reached its climax of power.

These comedies, which for many are the center of delight, if not of worship, in Shakespeare's work, have a smoothness and softness of execution and effect, somewhat Victorian in the quality of their art, if I may venture to say so, somewhat Tennysonian in exquisiteness of impression: not that Shakespeare resembles Tennyson in style, but there is a kinship of genius between them at that stage of Shakespeare. This period of smoothness and softness in art marks a point of perfection which lasts but a moment. Art roughens again, in mood and act, as it bends to the new age. There is a Michael Angelo for a Rafael then; or the Pergamon marbles replace the Parthenon. It may be for better or for worse, but the new age will have its way. The peculiarity in Shakespeare's case is that he himself brought in the new age, with the tragedies and the last romances. Though Webster and Ford followed him, he had already struck the hour. The cycle of romantic art in the drama was complete, though there might be a long after-play of its fires.

Shakespeare not only embodied the spirit of romantic art in his own age; he heralded a greater movement in time. Art has a double visage: it looks before and after. Romance is its forward-looking face. The germ of growth is in romanticism. Formalism, on the other hand, consolidates tradition; gleans what has been

gained and makes it facile to the hand or the mind; economizes the energy of genius. Formalism supports feebler spirits, directs, and restrains. Formalism is a backward looking mode, and archaic with respect to its own time. Romance plows in the field of the future as in an eternal spring. It is true that the reaction from Shakespeare's art was extreme in England. An intellectual, rather than a poetic, age succeeded. But when the earth began to expand again with an April season of the world, how the seed of romanticism sprang everywhere, like grass, as if it were life's natural verdure! Romantic art did not then, indeed, put forth one all-embracing genius, like Shakespeare; it required a Byron, a Tennyson, and a Browning to complete the cycle in our age just past; but the voice of the modern triad is that of romance once more a-wing for a supreme flight. The Renaissance found a new birth in Keats and Shelley and many another; and though romanticism, spreading through a wide circle of art and thought, seems less exclusively, less predominantly literary, in that age of the nineteenth century, it gave breath to a whole spiritual movement. Its leaders were not more indebted to Shakespeare than to the other great spiritual guardians, as I have called them, of the international State that exists invisibly at the core of modern civilization; but they are indebted to him, as one of those guardians, there sitting with his peers.

Shakespeare has been praised in English more than anything mortal except poetry itself. Fame exhausts thought in his eulogy. "The myriad-minded one" is his best designation. Wholly apart, however, from his extraordinary mental inclusiveness, the comprehensive grasp and intuitive penetration of his visionary genius,

such that he seemed to create worlds of being like separate stars — and apart also from the substance of wisdom which the dramas contained, he was especially wonderful, let me add, as a man of letters merely — that is, as a man accustomed to express ideas in written words. An excess of linguistic power over language, equally with an excess of metrical power over verse, characterized the latest plays. A marvelous power of expression over language often distinguishes genius; but Shakespeare in his phrases seems independent of the bonds of language as of the bonds of meter. But he was something more and other than literary. He was a wonderful example of the human spirit, and in his creative power affects one with a sense of the inexplicable, like a natural force. Above all, he was intensely human in his spirituality; that is why he is so often thought unspiritual. Hence he gathers the world under the spell of his genius. It is thus that he is beheld at last as an arch-leader in the world of the spirit of man — one of those few who, however distant in country or epoch, are, after centuries, the true "sons of memory."

I have set forth Shakespeare, you perceive, immortal as he is, in the light of an historic world lapsing now into the shadows of time. I remember once, when I was sailing over the Aegean Sea northward from Athens, I saw what was afterward for me a long-recollected scene. Naturally my eyes were fastened on the Parthenon, visible from afar. Shores and promontories slowly became obscure in the growing distance. At last nothing remained except the temple seen against the setting sun. Every touch of earth had departed from it — a vision as it were in the golden west. I thought how some young Ionian, approaching, thus saw it under the dawn, ages since,

with the glint on Athene's lifted spear — first a gleam, then the temple, then the "darling city." I saw it in my departure, garmented with light, a ruin alone in the sun. I was to me then the symbol of antique beauty. It is so that I see Shakespeare's world in the light of a receding age.

THE SALEM ATHENAEUM

An address before the Salem Athenaeum at the formal opening of Plummer Hall, October 2, 1907

THE SALEM ATHENAEUM

Mr. President:

I am accustomed to say that Essex County is the most blessed spot on the earth's surface, for ordinary human life. If I am pressed for some explanation, I own that possibly filial affection enters into my judgment, but that it seems to me that material comfort is more widely distributed here than elsewhere through the whole population, and especially that it is the best place to bring up a boy in. It is not the wealthiest of communities; it is not the most intellectual; it is the home neither of art nor manners. In these respects New York, Paris and Italy surpass it. It is not the most beautiful in scenery nor the most suave in atmosphere. I should hesitate to say that it is the most civilized. The marks of civilization are hard to name. Commonly each nation or era points to its own characteristic achievement as the mark of civilization: Tyre to its wealth, Athens to letters and the arts, Rome and England to government. But wealth has flourished in all civilizations, whether as flocks and herds, hoards of jewels and coins, trade privilege, stock-certificates, without much changing its character in any age or environment; letters and arts appear and disappear like the cities they illuminate and adorn; spiritual lives have been lived in the midst of revolting conditions of blood, brutality and ignorance in many lands and times, capital inventions were made ages ago in China, and the most

vaunted of modern inventions hardly equals in dignity and power that old invention of the alphabet. It is truly hard to say in what civilization consists, if one looks at the long career of men justly. Yet, obeying the universal influence which guides men's thoughts on this matter along the lines of their own efforts, in this epoch of democracy it has seemed to me that one mark of advancing civilization now is the degree to which we succeed in obviating the natural or artificial inequalities in the condition of men at large; or, in a word, one measure of our own civilization is our power to approach social justice. It is no part of my own dream to divide equally the material goods of men; but, a free career being left to personal initiative and its rewards, it does seem to me that such a portion of material wealth in the community should be set aside as to secure to all citizens equal ownership in and benefit from the great fruits of civilization, which should be national and not personal possessions. I mean, for example, a public right to the benefits of science, as instanced in medicine or engineering and illustrated by public hospitals and water-supply; or to the benefits of elementary or higher knowledge as illustrated in public schools and colleges; or to the benefits of art as illustrated in museums, parks, monuments, and all that adorns a city and softens the life of its people. That is a fortunate city in which the universal human wants are rationally met or alleviated by public means, so that its citizens feel an equal ownership, not in the material accumulation of wealth, but in the accumulation of civilizing power in the community to better the condition of men — to secure health, intelligence, enjoyment, relief, opportunity, within the limits of what life allows. Such a community

puts in the breast of every man born into it the most precious of all human possessions — hope. I wish that the mark of citizenship were less exclusively thought of as the right to vote, and thereby share in government, which (as we all know) is often a very illusory thing; but rather as the right to share in the common good, secured by public wealth — the good of education, health, recreation, the many forms of public property and expenditure, of which the fruition is diffused through every home like daily dividends. There is little need to expand upon a theme which, more or less clearly understood, is the ideal of all of us, and one that we inherit; but I desire to make plain why it is that I merely hesitated to describe our county as, in the line of our efforts, an uncommonly civilized spot. Surely there are few places on the earth's surface so democratically peopled, in the best sense; few, where under the operation of rightful taxation and private beneficence the public wealth has brought the goods of modern life, the fruits of progress, so within reach of whosoever will to take them and home to every door; few where the accumulated civilizing power of the community is a possession held in common. This city is excellently supplied by its public institutions and otherwise with the means of storing and communicating this wealth; and it is especially distinguished by the little group of institutions of the scientific and literary life, seldom found so happily united — the Athenæum, the Essex Institute, the East India Marine Society, and the Peabody Academy, which have grown up together, and, as it were, in the same shell. They are the crown of the city, and stand to it in the place of a University, and one of the best kind, one not founded, but native to the city, growing out of its own past, body of its body,

and soul of its own soul. It is a remarkable and instructive phenomenon in American culture.

What is most useful to observe is that our democracy, our socialism, our use of the public wealth for the common good as a matter of just right, is not a brand-new thing, something theoretic and reformatory; but is our tradition from the past; it is home-sprung and home-bred. These various societies are rooted in old days. To inquire into their history is like excavating ancient cities; under each we find a predecessor, sometimes more than one. You are familiar with the origins of the Athenæum, and I shall only touch upon them to illustrate other matters. It is proper to recall the great name of Franklin, whose luminous genius was the ruling star of the second age of the colonies, when, in the growth of its secular and commercial life, the lines of the nation began to be molded. Various as were his works, and marvelous as was his forecasting wisdom, it is doubtful, in view of the results, whether any of his minor plans gathered such increase of power, as it grew, as did his founding of the subscription Social Library in Philadelphia, which may fairly be looked on as the father of the public libraries of the United States. The principle of associated effort was dear to him, and in this case it was put to great uses. The Salem Social Library was founded in 1760, and was the third in the country. It is true that this was a full generation after Franklin, but things moved slowly in those days. The point of interest is that here was the first place in Massachusetts where Franklin's idea germinated. A still greater distinction, as it seems to me, belongs to the second of the two libraries that underlay the Athenæum, that called the Philosophical Library, which was at that time, I suppose,

unique in the country, and whose influence was one of the springs of the scientific studies that have distinguished this city. It was, as you all know, a prize of war; but I do not find in your records any precise account of its capture.

It was on the homeward voyage from Bilboa that the ship "Pilgrim," Captain Joseph Robinson commanding, hailing from Beverly, after a successful privateering cruise, fell in, on January 5, 1781, with the British ship, "Mars." The opponents were not unevenly matched. The "Pilgrim" was of two hundred tons burden, and carried sixteen nine-pound cannon and a crew of one hundred and forty men; the "Mars" was frigate-built, four hundred and fifty tons mounting twenty-four carriage guns, and manned by a crew of one hundred men. The combat lasted over three hours, and is described as one of the most severe and desperate sea-fights of the Revolution; at the end, both ships being much shattered and disabled and the "Mars" having lost her captain and five men killed, with eighteen wounded, victory rested with the Americans. The "Pilgrim" reached Beverly, February 9, and was followed by her prize on the 13th. The ship and cargo, having been duly condemned, were advertised for sale April 11; but owing to a severe storm the auction was postponed until April 17. It was at this sale that, with the friendly co-operation of Andrew and John Cabot, owners, the philosophical library belonging to Dr. Richard Kirwan of Dublin, was sold for a small sum to the group of gentlemen and scholars, inspired by the Rev. Joseph Willard of Beverly, who formed themselves into a small association for its common use. It was kept in the minister's house near the Common, in a room which was in my boyhood still known as "Mr.

Willard's study," and where — and the memory makes me feel less a stranger here — I used often to play as a child. It was a remarkable body of men who gathered in that room to form the association. We are apt to think of those old elders as only less forbidding in their lives and persons than in their portraits, and doubtless they were very solemn folk; but by the time of the Revolution other ranks of life had mixed with the old clergy, and what strikes us in this particular gathering was the infusion of learning and science in the circle. It was less a clerical than a scholarly group; and it is surprising to find on the obscure lane of a small colonial town, such as Beverly then was, a group of seven men gathered in the hard times of the Revolution to advance the cause of science in its higher forms, and to use the opportunity that the chance of war had cast their way to prosper the great works of peace. It is remarkable, too, to find such distinction in the group. Joseph Willard, the mover of the enterprise, was afterward the first president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and also president of Harvard College; Joshua Fisher, also of Beverly, was the first president of the Massachusetts Medical Society; Manassah Cutler, of Ipswich, besides other claims to distinction, was the founder of the State of Ohio. The remaining four, Barnard, Prince, Holyoke and Orne, of this city, are too well known in its traditions to require any reminder here of their honorable careers. This little club of learned men, with additions from time to time of other eminent names, continued the library and finally handed it on to the Athenæum. At the conclusion of the war they offered an indemnity to the original owner, Dr. Kirwan, who declined it with an expression of his happiness in finding

that his library had met with such good fortune and served so excellent a use. To me this little story of how the scientific library reached our coasts is a very picturesque incident of the Revolution; the gallant sea-fight, the circle in Mr. Willard's study, the offer of recompense make up a complete and romantic tale; it carries off the honors of both war and peace.

I will not enter further into details of the history of the Athenæum. They are well known to you; but on such an occasion as this it is proper, and belongs to filial piety, to refresh our minds with the remembrance of our debt to the past and to recall its character. The library thus founded on the one hand after the example of Franklin and on the other by the ardor for science, with additions made by a new subscription, became nearly a century ago the Athenæum. It may truly be described as one of the earliest hearths of culture in our country; and its destiny was worthy of its origins. It is a great distinction for this library that it sheltered in their youth two of the first-born men of genius in this country — one, foremost in science, and one foremost in literature. Here Nathaniel Bowditch found at once the broad horizons of science, and learned its dignity, its compass and methods in the most effective way in which they can appeal to the imagination and apprehension of youth, by the mere sight of great monuments of its literature in books; here he made his mind exact, searching and practical, and informed with true learning. He was aware of his debt, the modes of which are easily seen, and he remembered it throughout his life, and at his death by a grateful bequest. Here Hawthorne, in the bitter years of his solitude found society, and in his poverty the riches that neither moth nor rust corrupt

and that pass not away. If the modes of his debt are less plain in his works, that belongs to the secret of the alchemy of genius which is wonderful in its processes and transformations. He must have begun to read here shortly after his return from college, if not earlier, for his family had a connection with the library. One of his name was a founder of the Athenæum; his aunt, Mary Manning, had a share in 1827, and the next year transfered it to him, and he remained a proprietor until February 21, 1839, when he removed to Boston; and during his second residence in Salem he again became a proprietor for nearly three years, from January 6, 1848, to November 29, 1850, when with the winning of his fame he left his native town to be the citizen of his country forever. The lists of his borrowings from the library are still in existence, and have been printed; but the closest scrutiny shows little direct obligation in his tales and romances to the books he read. He was a discursive reader, and read — it seems to me — mostly to store his mind with travel, history, literature. His genius is singularly original, a brooding mind such as would naturally spring from his sea-ancestry; heredity underlay his imagination; but the intellectual store that supported it, all that one draws from books, was given by this library. Yet were it only solace that he derived from his reading here, it was a great honor to this library to have afforded it to so solitary and unbefriended a genius through the years of his trial. The memory of Hawthorne's presence here is that which will longest abide.

There is a twofold moral which so naturally flows from the history of the Athenæum that — though I had no thought of bringing you counsel — yet I will not forbear to draw. After all, too, this little group of Salem insti-

tutions is not only the crown of the city, but honors the whole county; here its history is stored, its ideals illustrated and its fame most borne through the world. The first part of the moral is that this library is by its own traditions dedicated, as it were, to science and literature. It was agreed when the Athenæum took over the Philosophical Library that it would continue to subscribe to the great sets of publications; and this was done. The city has certainly owed something of its scientific repute in later days, to the presence of these books and to their example. It would seem the mere fulfillment of its romantic birth that here in this library there should always be a body of sound science in its highest forms. In a similar way it would seem natural that Hawthorne's library should always hold the established literature of the world. I was struck in reading over the titles of the catalogue of 1858 with the excellence of the collection. I trust that in the last half century the same standard has been maintained. It might be thought that the duty I indicate should be devolved on the Public Library, since that, too, has been happily established in the city; but a Public Library is necessarily bound to a popular expenditure of its money. This little group of institutions, to which I have so often referred, offers an unusual opportunity; it naturally suggests co-operation and the further development of that associated effort which Franklin wisely advised. In many Italian cities, no larger if so large as Salem, there have long been academies, which have bred scholars of distinction and have advanced knowledge of all kinds; if the Athenæum were developed along the lines of its original design, it might well be a powerful support of such associations. The idea, however, may even take a larger scope. You

have, doubtless, observed that of late the university in this country tends to become, what it was of old in Italy and Europe generally, a municipal institution. New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Louisville, Cleveland, to name no others, have universities which are, explicitly or practically, city institutions. Buffalo is now considering the establishment of such a university. Our neighborhood to Harvard, and other similar institutions, precludes the necessity for such action here; but it is plain that the group of institutions here might stand in the place of much of the office of a university for the city, with growth of time and an intelligent co-operation among them. Public bequests are useful; but often those who devise means of extending their usefulness, of bringing what I have called the public wealth, meant, however limited, for communal purposes, into contact with the people — those who devise means of extracting the greatest possible utility out of such donations, are hardly less to be thanked than the original donors, as they are hardly less serviceable. The diffusion of these riches is as important as their accumulation. I began by saying that the scientific and literary institutions of the city were to it in the place of a university, and so in their measure they have proved; but having regard to the future and keeping in mind the example here early set of preparing the way on a high scale of hope and purpose, it is becoming to the place and the occasion tonight to hope that science and literature may here forever find a peculiar home and be generously stored for the higher uses of the city's intellectual life as that is fed from many kindred streams.

I was glad to observe in the collection a considerable proportion of foreign books, whose presence, I suppose,

was partly due to the bequest of Miss Susan Burley specially set apart for literature in foreign languages. It was an enlightened policy that was thus followed. It is singularly provincial to look on literature as limited to English, and much more so if the whole field of knowledge be included. It is as if one should be content to know English history only and nothing of the continent; for English literature itself is as much intertwined with other literatures as English history is with the history of the world. The times of narrow horizons have gone by; they are out-of-date as much as the stage-coach; the whole world has been widely thrown open in the last age, and is now accessible from end to end, and is greatly growing into one broad dominion of man's mind and heart. It is necessary to have on our shelves the knowledge and life of nations and races that every day grow more nigh to us than the sister states were when this library was founded. I was interested to learn in Buffalo last spring that the Public Library there circulates hundreds of Polish books. Even our little library in Beverly has French and Italian volumes. In such a library as this, one might well hope to find, in time, the entire standard literature of the European world. It is not so very large a body, numbered in volumes. It is obvious that this collection, that I indicate as the core of an endowed and privileged library like this — a collection of the best of the world's science and literature — would be mainly for a select class of minds; and this might be thought an objection. The objection, however, merely serves to bring out more forcibly the second part of the moral which I said naturally flows from the history of the Athenæum. It has in the past fed two such minds, Bowditch and Haw-

thorne; and this was perhaps, in the balances of the world, its most important service. It is said sometimes that the best school is that which best educates the best-endowed boy in it. My own deep belief in individuality and the immeasurable value of personal genius to the world might not lead me to adopt so extreme a view in practice; but I am quite sure that such a library as this, with its happy experience, may well see to it that its collection shall feed the highest class of minds that approach it in youth or ripen in it in manhood, and may even consider this as almost its hereditary privilege. It is equally necessary in the ideal city to provide for the best and for the humblest. It belongs to the Public Library primarily to provide for the latter, and for such a library as this to provide for the former. I have observed abroad that it is easy in cloistered institutions to be content with the riches of the past, and to regard them as dusty heirlooms, with proud indolence. It is rather for us to lead the lives our fathers led.

Having ventured so far in sketching the lines of a noble city watching over the life of her citizens, I am emboldened to add a few words more upon a related matter, which like many things dear to my heart, I can serve only by occasionally speaking of as I may have opportunity. I am particularly led to it by another trivial childish memory, associated in my mind with the Athenæum. You may remember there used to stand in the yard, not far from the old Athenæum building, some images. Now the sight of those images was my first vision of the world of art. I used to walk over from Beverly in my boyhood to look at them, gazing (as it seems to me now) through a fence that I was not tall enough to look over. It is, as I say, a trivial memory;

but it helped me afterwards to understand why Mr. Henry James, describing Hawthorne looking over with some friends the designs of Flaxman here in Salem, spoke of the incident as "pathetic." The thirst of a child for beauty is always pathetic. I remember an acquaintance telling me once, many years ago, of a London child in the street saying to him, as the boy looked wonderingly at the roses he carried, "How rich you are!" I have wondered often on what crumbs and herbs of the fields Italian children and Bedouin boys can physically survive; but it is almost as surprising to think on what thin fare a New England boy, with a touch of imagination, hung to the life of art in those old days. I was the more struck, on this account, when a few years ago I visited the Exeter Academy, and was amazed at the beauty of its halls and rooms; it seemed an intellectual home — a home for the mind — filled as it was with casts, great views and various ornaments. It opened the world of the present and past to the eye; the Greek room was a bodily entrance to a new world; and I am quite sure that many a well-bred boy, when he first passes those doors, feels that he has come to a new and greater life, to a place where the life of the human mind is visible in its noble history. I remembered the grimness of my own Exeter days. Last year in Brusa, in Asia Minor, I visited, one rainy day, a mosque, where for many years there had been an old-established school, and was allowed, when I explained that I, too, was a teacher, to go to the boys' rooms. I climbed great flights of stone steps without any guard-rails, through what seemed desolate and neglected surroundings, to the roof, where the two boys, fifteen or sixteen years old, who were my temporary hosts, showed me the line of little rooms

running in an outside circle round the mosque, the interior of which could be seen through apertures on the other side. They took me to their room; a small, cell-like place, with the straw mat on which, as an infidel, I could not step, a low table hardly raised from the floor, with an inkstand, a few worn books, and materials for making coffee, a pallet on the floor — that was all, except the little window framing in the most beautiful of May landscapes and looking miles away over the fair country — such a landscape view as we associate with Italian monasteries. It was not so unlike my own Exeter days, except that we had no landscape. There was great charm in it, with the boys interested in my interest, standing by; but it was a charm of old days, of foreign things, of life long past lived in strange ways in the mosque. I have made a long anecdote of it, but my mind lingers happily on the scene. Now, if you will pardon me, it seems to me that, rich as the city is in the means of the intellectual life, if it be lacking in anything, it is in the opportunity to satisfy the thirst for beauty and to open the mind out in art. I dare say your school-houses are supplied with objects such as make Exeter beautiful for a boy to grow up in, but I cannot think they are so rich in such things as I could wish. There should be casts of sculpture and bronze which give to physical beauty its soul, which add to bodily perfection radiance and wings as it were, and teach the boy's eye that perfection is not of the body after all, but of what lives in it and looks from it, and is both incarnated and released by it in its beauty. There should be views of the great cities and squares of the world, like the colored prints of Venice, which shall open the greatness and romance of the world to the boy, and

there should be portraits of heroic figures and pictures of historic action; and these should be, not like oasis spots flung on a desert of wall, as I have sometimes seen them, but abundant, and arranged with home-like refinement, so that these rooms and building shall be, as I have said, homes for the minds of the children and youth, and homes that prepare them for the greatness of the world and of man's life. In the old days of the India trade, what romance there was in these communities; every home knew the sound of magical Eastern names; no closet or chest could open but what Sabæan odors came forth on the air; there were ivories, sandal-wood and curious and delicate carvings; a thousand things, to stir the imagination, to give the sense of the distant, the strange, the adventurous — the feeling of a world of men. This effect can still be gained by the use of such means as I have described. The value of it is worth at least an added year to the curriculum; and more than that, for it feeds what nothing else can feed — what starves. For having been much in colleges and near to education I must bear my hard testimony — the brain thrives and the head; but the soul dies. My creed is a brief one; but I do completely believe in Plato's doctrine that the sight and presence of beauty shapes the soul in childhood and youth, in beautiful forms. If there cannot be a great museum of art here, it is easy, and to my mind it is practically a better thing, to adorn the schools freely with the admirable reproductions of art which are to be had; and I believe that such a policy commonly adopted through the county would be a civilizing power among the very first for efficiency in the life of our youth.

It is obvious that in the wandering and natural re-

flections which this occasion has brought to my mind — and which are meant less as a formal address than as a neighborly talk — what has emerged more and more is the ideal of the noble city, which has gradually clarified itself in my phrases as I have spoken. Yet it does not seem to me that anything in that ideal is the conscious work of my own thought or will; its features have come forth as the statue from the native rock; it is an ancestral face, the hope of the fathers, the issue and the heir of their toils. Looking back, we have seen in the history of this institution their humble but wise beginnings for a larger and communal intellectual life; the sea-fortune wisely availed of to lift the ideal of what was possible in a pioneer land; the molding of the genius of the sons of the city; and generation after generation caring for and enriching the trust left to their charge. One should specially mention Caroline Plummer in honorable remembrance tonight, who gave a home to this library, and housed with it the kindred societies under one roof. Now a new change has come, and the Athenæum formally opens its own peculiar home. It is a time for congratulation; but I should not be a New Englander, if I did not add that it is also a time to remember that the penalty of success is more work, the penalty of privilege is duty, the penalty of power is responsibility. These three — work, duty, responsibility — are tonight yours in large measure. It may seem that the lines in which I have broadly forecast the future are a dream. It is a dream that the touch of gold would quickly make real; and far less a dream than the reality would seem tonight, could those old scholars look upon this scene and the city in which it is set. The history of Salem wealth gives every warrant that we

should believe that the springs of public spirit will not dry up in the life and work of this and later generations, that the civic ideal will yet find its wisely self-denying servants whose perennial gifts have in this city assuaged the eternal inward strife of society and brought nearer that social justice I began by speaking of, which shall secure to all her citizens an equal ownership in the accumulated civilizing power of the state, which seems to me in the present stage of our world the rational end of democracy, as a political idea. It is in this spirit that in our hearts, if not in formal words, we dedicate this house to be a home of the intellectual life, and a hearth of the fine traditions of Salem; and we see, if dimly, yet clearer than our fathers saw, the face of the noble city that in time shall be — the Puritan city accomplished in its own ideal.

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